THE RAMADAN OF THE SAINTLY ELDERS

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The Ramadan of the Saintly Elders

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Idara Isha'at-e-Diniyat

Ramadhan of the Pious (Akaabir Ka Ramadhan)

The practices of the saintly Elders during Ramadan have already been mentioned in the “VIRTUES OF RAMADAN”. Thereafter, while working on “AAP BETI” and upon the demands of some friends I also made mention of some of the practices and habits of Hazrat Saharanpuri (May Allah fill his resting place with noor). Now, because of the subject under discussion, I will again refer to those practices in the booklet.

A list of questions regarding how Hazrat Hakeemul Ummat Maulana Thanvi spent Ramadaan was sent to Kwaja Azizul Hasan Saheb. After receiving his reply, it was the request of some friends as well as my own desire to answer those same questions with reference to the Ramadan habits of Hazrat Saharanpuri. Hence, first of all, I shall write down those questions and then explain how Hazrat Saharanpuri, Moulana Khaleel Ahmad spent Ramadan.

LETTER ADDRESSED TO KHWAJA AZIZUL HASAN SAHEB:

Dearest Khwaja Saheb, (May Allah increase your worthy efforts). Assalamo Alaikum Wa Rahmatullah.

On hearing that you have been residing in Thana Bhavan for some time, I was greatly pleased. May Allah grant you many degrees of spiritual progress. The reason for writing this letters is to trouble you about something special, and after much thought I have decided to ask you a favour. At this time there is perhaps no one who has a more intimate relationship with Hazrat Moulana (Thanvi) than you. Hence it will be quite easy for you. It is my desire to find out what are the general habits and practices of Hazrat Moulana during Ramadan.

I would have liked to ask Hazrat himself but feel too much respect for him to ask. And if I should wish to reside in his company in order lo observe his habits myself, one or two days will not suffice. Therefore I have decided to make you the means for gaining this information. I hope that you will not mind my laying this burden upon your head. For the sake of ease, I have drafted the questions myself:

1. What is Hazrat’s manner of ascertaining the time of “iftar”? Does he rely on the times indicated on the calendar or does he observe the light of the sun, moon etc?

2. If he does rely on the calendar times, how many minutes does he wait as a precautionary measure or does he not take any such precautions?

3. Does he have any special preference for iftar or does he merely partake whatever is placed before him to eat

4. How much time is allowed to elapse between breaking the fast and performing Maghrib salaah?

5. Does he break his fast at home or in the Madressa?

6. Does he break his fast in the presence of those present or alone?

7. Does Hazrat generally break his fast with dates, zam-zam or anything else?

8. Is there any change in the quantity or quality of the nafl prayers after Maghrib? If so, what difference?

9. What does he habitually recite in Salatul Owabeen? Kindly explain his usual habits as well as his practice in Ramadan

10. What is his fixed habit regarding meals'! In other words what are his mealtimes? Is there any difference in the amount he eats in Ramadaan as compared with non-Ramadan times'?

11. With regard to Taraweeh salaah, I know that this year due to illness, Hazrat listens to the Quran being recited (by someone else) in the Madressa. But generally, what is his established practice? Does he himself lead the taraweeh prayers, reciting the Quran, or does he always listen to it? How much daily?

12. Is there a fixed time for finishing the completion of the Quran on the 27th or 29th night or on any other specific night?

13. Does Hazrat spend sometime with his attendants and followers after taraweeh salaah or not? Does he proceed homewards immediately or does so only after some time'? If he does delay a while, how does he spend this time?

14. On returning home, does he immediately go to sleep or has he any other fixed habit? If he does go to sleep, then, from what time until what time?

15. What is his general practice in Tahajjud salaah? In other words, how much does he recite and from what time till what time?

16. What is his habit at 'sehri' time? At what time does he take sehri and how much time before dawn does he finish?

17. Does he have the fixed habit of drinking milk or eating anything specific for sehri? Does his roti have to be freshly baked or does he eat that which was prepared the night before?

18. Does he perform his Fajr salaah at the time of the onset of the greyness of dawn (‘isfaar’) or some time before that?

19. Is there any special time for sleeping during the day or not? If he does sleep, is it in the morning or the afternoon?

20. What is his habit regarding the ‘tilawat’ of the Quran during the day? In other words, does he have a fixed amount to be recited daily in Ramadan or not?

21. Does he have the habit of reciting for anyone to listen and correct (daur) or not?

22. When he does recite, does he do so by heart or from the Quran?

23. Does Hazrat always perform I’tikaaf? Does he ever perform I’tikaaf for more than the last ten days of Ramadan?

24. Is there any marked difference between the practices of Hazrat during the last ten days and the rest of Ramadan?

Apart from what is contained in these questions, if you could write down any other special habits of Hazrat, pertaining to Ramadan, it will be greatly appreciated. And should you be able to write in some detail and also find out the habits of Hazrat Hajee Saheb, how wonderful it will be!

At this moment the only person who will know the details of Hajee Imdadullah Saheb’s Ramadan, is Hazrat Thanvi.

I know that to entrust you with this task is placing a burden upon yourself, but bear in mind that the actions and practices of the shaikhs are beacons of light and guidance for the novices. Insha Allah many will derive benefit there-from.

Yours truly,

Mohammad ZAKARIYYA.

THE ANSWER FROM KHWAJA AZIZUL HASAN:

Dear Respected Moulana Zakarya,

Your letter filled me with great joy. Because I was myself not fully acquainted with some aspects of Hazrat's general habits in Ramadan, I was forced to present your letter to Hazrat himself.

On reading it, he said: "Write back to him saying that if he wants to know, he should ask me directly." I write this merely to inform you. It is because I am presently in I'tikaaf that I write this in pencil. Kindly forgive me for this.

Yours truly,

AZIZUL HASAN.

There is no date to this letter. After further research, Hazrat Thanwi's Ramadan practices have become known to me, which will be noted down later. As already said, after quoting this letter, some friends felt that in answer to those same questions, I should note down the practices of Hazrat Saharanpuri, even though this has already been described in concise form in "FAZAA-IL RAMADAN" as well as in "TAZKIRA-E-KHALEEL".

I was most fortunate indeed to have spent Ramadan with Hazrat Moulana Khaleel Ahrnad from the year 1328 H to 1345, except for the year 1344 Hijri when Hazrat was in Mecca, while I was in Saharanpur.

THE RAMADAN OF HAZRAT MOULANA KHALEEL AHMAD SAHARANPURI:

1. Special care was taken at Hazrat's place with regard to the setting right of clocks and watches. A special person was appointed to do that throughout the year. But during Ramadan, special care was taken to set them correctly through the aid of the Post Office or the telephone department etc. Even then, 'iftar' was started two or three minutes after the times shown on calendars.

Similarly at Raipur, where the rising and setting of the sun can quite clearly be seen, Hazrat Raipuri took special care that the times shown on watches were carefully synchronised for both those times. As for my late father and my uncle (Maulana Ilyaas), they did not rely much on the times shown on calendars nor on clocks. For them this hadith was of paramount importance:

"When the night has set in from here and the day has departed from here, the faster's fast is over."

2. As already mentioned, he used to wait two or three minutes after the times shown on calendars.

3. Hazrat was very particular about breaking his fast with dates and zam-zam. When throughout the year any returning Hajis brought presents of dates and zam-zam, these were stored away for use during Ramadan. There was no problem in keeping zam-zam stored away, but if the dates started going bad, they were distributed before Ramadan. However, at the time of Iftar Hazrat also used to drink half or a quarter cup of tea with milk and then gave the rest of the cup to this humble soul.

4. During Hazrat's time a period of roughly ten minutes used to be allowed between the azaan and the salaah for Maghrib, so that those who performed their iftar at home could be allowed to arrive at the mosque in time to join the jama'at.

5. Hazrat broke his fast in the Madressa together with a few guests and attendants - fifteen to twenty in all. In Medina, he used to break his fast in the Madressa Uloom Shar-'iyyah.

6. This has already been answered.

7. This has already been answered under No 3.

8. There was no difference in the number of raka-'aat performed as nafl after Maghrib. However in the manner of performance there was a definite difference. Generally he recited 1-1/4 paras therein and during Ramadan it was those paras, which he was to recite in taraweeh later in the evening.

9. This has already been answered.

10. After Salatul-Owabeen, Hazrat used to return home to have his meal over which he took about twenty to twenty-five minutes, but he ate very little during this meal.

Here by us in Kandhla and Gangoh there was no custom of eating pulao at sehri time. In fact there was a strong feeling against it as people considered it something, which made fasting difficult by causing thirst. For the first time I ate pulao at Hazrat's place at sehri in Saharanpur. I have also never had the habit of eating pulao at iftar time because it proved to be a burden in performing taraweeh afterwards. However as long as my health remained good, I used to have a solid meal at sehri time.

11. Except for the last two years of his life when weakness and ill health troubled him, Hazrat used to lead the taraweeh prayers himself and recite the Quran in it. Before the DARUL-TALABAH (students' hostel) was built, he used to lead the taraweeh prayers in the old Madressa building. But after the old student's hostel

was erected, then on the order of Hazrat, my late father led the first taraweeh prayers therein. Thereafter Hazrat himself always led the taraweeh prayers himself.

12. It was his fixed habit to finish the khatam of the Quran on the evening of the 29th Ramadan. In the first number of nights he recited 1-1/4 paras and thereafter one para per night. In this respect there is a story about Hazrat Shah Abdul Qadir R.A. 1f Ramadan was to carry 29 days, he used to recite two paras on the first night and if it was to carry 30 days, he used to recite one para. His brother Shah Abdul Aziz, after having performed taraweeh in his own mosque, used to send someone to Shah Abdul Qadir's mosque to find out whether his brother recited one or two paras on the opening night of Ramadan. If it became known that his brother recited two paras, he used to say: "This year Ramadan will have 29 days." (Note that this is not a case of knowledge of the unseen, but knowledge obtained through the means of 'kashf".

13. After taraweeh Hazrat used to rest for about fifteen to twenty minutes while some attendants pressed his legs. At this time there used to be some general conversation on the Quran. For example, someone may have erroneously corrected him from behind or it may be concerning something, which might have happened during taraweeh. Some minutes used to be spent on this in light-hearted manner.

Many Hafiz Sahiban came from far and wide to perform taraweeh behind him. As for me, I generally performed taraweeh in the masjid of Hakeem Is-haq Saheb and sometimes on the insistence of my mother, in Hazrat's home. I usually finished my taraweeh early and then proceeded to where Hazrat led the prayers. By that time Hazrat had merely finished four or six rakaat. This was so because taraweeh at Hakeem Ishaq's mosque started earlier than at the Madressa. Apart from that, I, through my own inability, used to recite quite fast.

Once he started reciting Surah TALAAQ:

"Yaa ayyuhan nabiyu iza tallaktumun nisaa a fa talliku hunnah.."

Erroneously, I quickly "corrected" saying:

" Yaa ayyuhal lazinah aamanu.."

At that time Hafiz Muhammad Hussain Saheb used to be the official corrector (He used to come all the way from Ujrara to Saharanpur to spend Ramadan in Hazrat's company). He and Maulana Abdul Lateef as well as my father all together uttered:

" Yaa ayyuhan nabiyu"

After taraweeh, while he was laying down to rest, Hazrat said: “Moulvi Zakarya, what happened? Were you asleep?”

I replied: “No sir, definitely not. I looked at the words:

“Iza tallakyumun nisaa a fa talliku hunna li iddati hinna wa ah sool iddati wattakullaha rabbakum la tukriju hunnah..”

All these are in the plural and I thus thought that it must be

because YA AYYUHAN NAABIYYU is in the single.”

Hazrat replied: “Are you using ‘qiyaas’ on the Quran too?

I replied: “No sir, this is not ‘qiyaas’. This is merely a case of grammatical rules."

Once it so happened that Hafiz Muhammad Hussain gave a wrong ‘luqma’ (correction) in taraweeh. I immediately gave the correct one. Unwittingly and involuntarily Hafiz Saheb said: “Ha (yes)” And then said what I had said.

After taraweeh, during Hazrat” s rest, I inquired: “Hazrat, did you accept my luqma or Hafiz Saheb’s?”

(I meant that Hafiz Saheb, by saying “ha" immediately invalidated his salaah, which meant that he was then out of the salaah. If Hazrat took his ‘luqma’ it would mean that his salaah as well as salaah of everybody else would be broken. But Hazrat understood the trap of my question quite well).

He replied: “I would have been mad to have accepted his ‘luqma’.”

These were the kind of things talked about. Sometimes there was some light thrown on the meaning of some verse. For example, I remember once Hazrat said, commenting on the verse:

“ Wa in ta’uddu ni’matallahi”

“And if you should all count the favours of Allah, you will never be able to enumerate them.”

He said: “With each favour of Allah, there joined countless other favours. Therefore the verse says: “And if you (all) should count...”

14) After taraweeh and after resting for a while, he used to go home, where for fifteen to twenty minutes he talked to his family members. Some of the women of

the ‘mohalla’ (town quarter) also used to arrive at this time, and he used to address them shortly, advising them. Thereafter he went to sleep for about two and a half to three hours.

15) It was his habit to recite two paras in tahajjud salaah. Sometimes it was a bit more and sometimes a bit less, according to the time available. When the hadith on ‘nazaa-ir’ came along in ‘BAZAL-MAJHOOD’, which is not in accordance with the sequence of verses in the Uthmani Quran, he told me: “Copy this hadith on a piece of paper. Today I want to recite it in this sequence in tahajjud prayers.”

I have heard that Hazrat Shaikhul Hind Maulana Mahmoodul Hasan used to recite two-rakaat nafl salaah, while sitting down after Witr salaah. Someone asked him: “Hazrat, is it not so that the reward for salaah sitting down, is only half?” Shaikhul-Hind replied: “Yes, ' brother, but my heart desires to follow the example of Rasulullah (SAW) whether the reward is more or less.”

(My opinion is that according to the rule, the reward for nafl salaah, performed while sitting down, is half. But when performed with this love for Rasulullah (SAW) and with the desire to follow his example, the reward is perhaps even more than when standing. After all the saying is quite well known that Majnoon even loved the dogs of the town where Layla lived.).

16. According to different times of the year, Hazrat used to get up about two or three hours before dawn. He had sehri about half an hour before dawn over which he took about fifteen to twenty minutes. Thus he finished about fifteen minutes before Fajr.

17. He had no special habit of eating anything special e.g. milk or anything similar. If it so happened that a present of ‘pheni’ (a kind of sweetmeat) was brought, he used to give of it to the whole family, while he himself used to take merely one or half a spoonful of it. However, sometimes pulao used to be cooked for sehri, but never for iftar. I have already stated that in Kandhla and Gangoh it was considered wrong to eat pulao at sehri time as it caused thirst afterwards.

As for myself, after eating pulao at Hazrat’s place for as long as my health remained good, and as long as sehri remained a special eating occasion, I continued eating pulao. And now for the last ten or twelve years, since there has been a host of visitors at all times, there has been pulao, meat and roti at iftar times and sweet rice at sehri.

At Hazrat’s house fresh roti was baked. There was also the fixed habit of tea drinking. I cannot remember myself drinking tea at sehri time because in Ramadan it was my habit to sleep after Fajr salaah. From 1338 H onwards, i.e., my first Haj

onwards, the habit of not sleeping at night during Ramadan started. This has been my habit until the last seven or eight years. However, now lately my illness has put an end to all my fixed habits and practices

18) It was Hazrat's habit in Ramadan to perform Fajr salaah at the onset of the greyness of dawn (isfaar), but it was done about ten or twelve minutes prior to the time at times other than in Ramadan.

19) Throughout the year after Fajr salaah, it was his habit to sit reciting various wazeefas. In the cold days of winter he did so after entering into the privacy of his own room while during the hot days he sat on a bed in the courtyard of the Madressa until sunrise. At such times, he also went into deep meditation. Then from sunrise onwards, he busied himself with his lecturing on Bukhari Shareef and Sahih Tirmithi. After 1335 H he busied himself at this time with the writing of BAZAL-MAJHOOD until about 11 or 12 o'clock.

During the Ramadans of that time, he used to rest for about an hour after performing Ishraq salaah. In the hot months, he then dictated his thoughts on BAZAL MAJHOOD till one o'clock while in the cold months he did so until 12 o'clock, thereafter resting till Zuhr salaah.

20) During Ramadan, Hazrat himself used to lead the taraweeh prayers until about two years before his death. After Zuhr salaah, he recited whatever he was to recite in taraweeh that night to Hafiz Muhammad Hussain Ujrarwy. This was what Hafiz Saheb used to come to Saharanpur for. Occasionally when for some reason or the other Hafiz Saheb was absent, he used to make 'daur' with me, but during his stay in Medina, he always recited to me. After my return from Haj, it was a time when his work on BAZAL MAJHOOD had also been completed, and he developed the habit of daily reciting one para to his wife. It was this para, which he was to recite in Salatul-Owabeen that night and also in taraweeh.

21) From after this Haj Hazrat also used to make 'daur' with my late father (May Allah fill his resting place with noor). It was this para, which he was later to recite in taraweeh. I have not seen Hazrat make 'daur' with anyone else except my late father.

22) I have very seldom seen Hazrat reciting the Holy Quran by reading from the Quran. Only sometimes did I see it.

23) Except for the last two or three years of his life when he had grown weak and was plagued by illness, I have never seen him not performing I'tikaaf of the last ten days of Ramadan. He used to perform it in the old Madressa masjid before the erection of the Darul Talabah and after this hostel was built, he performed I'tikaaf,

in the Darul Talabah masjid. Even during I'tikaaf he never put aside or suspended the writing arid dictating of BAZAL MAJHOOD. In fact on or about the 20th Ramadan, all the books required for research and the writing of this monumental work, were gathered and placed in the room on the western side of the KULTHOOMA MASJID. It was my task to place these books in the masjid as required and to replace them in the room after use. I have not seen him perform I'tikaaf at any other time apart from the last ten days of Ramadan.

24) I have not seen any real difference between his actions during the last ten days as compared with the rest of Ramadan, except for the fact that he rose a bit earlier in the morning. I have also mentioned in "VIRTUES OF RAMADAN" in concise manner that between the month of Ramadan and the rest of the months of the year there was no real difference in the lives of Hazrat Saharanpuri and Hakeemul Ummat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi. However, as for Hazrat Shaikhul Hind Maulana Mahmoodul Hasan, and Maulana Abdul Qadir Raipuri, there was a very marked difference of greater devotion and extra devotional activity.

25) As for Hazrat's occasional reading of newspapers at other times, this was completely discarded in Ramadan. In fact apart from the last two or three years, when he made 'daur' with my late father, the tasbeeh was always in his hands and his tongue all the time busy with dhikr. If ever any of his mureeds should ask something, he replied them. Some people like Mutawali Jaleel Saheb, and Riyadul Islam Saheb used to come from Kandhla and Meerut respectively to spend part of Ramadan with him on a regular basis without performing I'tikaaf, because they always wanted to return home one day before Eid.

IN TAZKIRA-E-KHALIL it is written: "Whenever the new moon of Ramadan was sighted, which ushered the month of the revelation of the Quran, and a time for much recitation of the word of Allah, there was no limit to his efforts and exertion in ibaadat. In taraweeh his general habit WAS TO RECITE 1-1/4 paras, performing ruku' after the reading of a ruku, finishing on the 27th night. "After his lecturing days in Mazahirul Uloom were over, he performed taraweeh in the old Madressa Masjid and after the Darul Talabah was built, he led taraweeh prayers for two years in the Darul Talabah masjid. (In the first year that the Darul Talabah was completed, my father performed taraweeh and thereafter Hazrat led the prayers and in that time Hazrat also performed I'tikaaf in the Darul Talabah Masjid. (Zakarya).

"Those who came to listen and follow him in salaah formed a vast gathering and from far and wide they came to spend Ramadan with him. In fact many Huffaz used to leave aside their own recitations of the Quran in order to stand behind him and follow his lead.

“Hazrat used to recite in a voice of medium loudness and in easy and comfortable mode so that every letter was audible and clearly understood. Because he had memorised the Quran in his childhood and because he became so engrossed in his reading, there were times when he could be corrected occasionally. However he never recited wrongly. It did happen on occasions that his tongue would stop or that he would become confused with some of the ‘mutashaabihaat’ verses, whereupon those who were appointed as correctors would quickly answer. Sometimes even these correctors would give wrong ‘luqma’, which he would not accept. He would then only correct himself after having given it a little thought, before proceeding further. Never would he become displeased at being corrected wrongly. In tact after the salaah he would console such an assistant by saying: “Nothing to worry. After all, if the reciter forgets, it is only natural for the listener also to forget. So if the assistant forgets and gives wrong ‘luqma’ it is no surprise.”

“He always led the taraweeh prayers but later when his age went beyond seventy, it became increasingly difficult for him to continue doing so. He used to say: “When I go into ruku’ the thought comes into my mind that perhaps I will not be able to rise up again for the second raka. Then I take courage and with difficulty I come up. In this manner I finally complete twenty rakaat, fearing in every raka that I may collapse and fall down, and feeling all the time that rising up from the sujood to the standing position is tantamount to climbing a mountain.”

“In this way two years passed with Hazrat not losing courage. Eventually, when his strength finally failed him, he stopped leading the taraweeh from the mehrab. Thereafter, he replaced it with listening to the readings of others and increased his own recitations of the Quran. During the holy month, he then used to recite from after Ishraq until eleven O’clock.”

TAZKIRA-E-KHALEEL:

Whatever Maulana Meeruty had written here, was the situation prior to the writing of BAZAL MAJHOOD. After Zuhr salaah, Hazrat had the habit of reciting one para daily to Hafiz Muhammad Hussain Saheb, who came all the way from Ujrara annually. From Asr until Iftar, Hazrat remained in the Madressa-e-qadeem with his attendants and visitors, generally in silence. For two years, I also saw him making ‘daur’ with my late father after Asr.

In I’tikaaf of the last ten days of Ramadan, my late father used to recite three paras daily in Tahajjud salaah. Then also Hazrat recited 1-1/4 paras daily in his nafl salaah after Maghrib. From 1345 Hijri onwards, I used to listen to these I - I/4 paras, which was to be recited after Maghrib. With me were Maulana al-Haj Shah Abdul Qadir Raipuri (R.A), Moulana al-Haj Sayed Ahmad Saheb, the brother of Shaikhul-Islam Moulana Madani as we followed him in salaah. At that time

Hazrat Raipuri was not feeling too well with the result that he used to sit down, and perform this salaah behind Hazrat. Hazrat, however, in spite of his weakness and advanced age, remained standing.

Because of his strong bond of friendship with some brothers from Meerut, viz., the late Hafiz Faseeh-uddin, Haji Wajeeh-uddin and Sheikh Rasheed Ahmad, Hazrat used to attend the function on the completion of their children's recitation of the khatam of the Quran in Meerut. These gentlemen fixed the khatam of Quran for the evening of the 20th Ramadan, because of Hazrat's going into I'tikaaf. Hazrat usually left on the morning of the 19th and returned on the morning of the 20th. His manner of participating in the khatam was such that he performed Esha salaah in the masjid after which he was taken home to perform taraweeh behind the Imam there. Then after Witr he returned to the masjid for the children's khatam. Usually, there was quite a delay on the eve of the khatam and they used to await Hazrat's return to the Mosque for the last four rakaat.

Maulana Meeruty writes: "After 1345, when the writing of BAZAL MAJHOOD had been completed, the time used for the writing of this book was utilised for 'tilawat' or for studying the book: "WAFA-UL-WAFA".

After Zuhr, it was the practice for the women in the house to recite the Holy Quran to my late mother. Purdah used to be so strictly observed that even I could not go there. The women folk had one floor of the building for themselves while the bottom floor was almost reserved for the attendants, followers, as well as for cooking and eating.

Maulana Meeruty also states: "When Maulana Ahmad Saheb and Moulana Zakarya saw that Hazrat after so much work involving mental strain, was further taxing his brain by reciting from memory so much, in spite of his bodily weakness, they pleaded with him to have consideration for his mental health and well-being. They told him that he was overtaxing his brain."

Without hesitation, Hazrat replied: "What other use is there now for this brain that I should now have consideration for it?"

Once he also said: "Because of my weakness, there is some adverse effect upon my memory. Therefore I fear that I may forget the Holy Quran, which I had memorised. Thus, as a precautionary measure I recite so much."

Once he also said: "If my brain so wishes it may go and give in, and if it so wishes, it may stay, working soundly, but under no circumstances shall the Word of Allah leave me."

And now, as for the last Ramadan of his life, what is there that I can say about the glory thereof? At that time his diet consisted of a mere cup of tea and a piece of roti, which too was consumed with great difficulty, but so much did he exert himself in reciting and listening to the Quran, in spite of his extreme weakness. At that time he recited 1-1/4 paras from memory after Fajr salaah. Then after Zuhr he again was busy with tilawat either from memory or from the Quran. Then after Maghrib he again recited 1-1/4 paras in Owabeen and then after performing Esha salaah in the Haram Shareef, he went to the Madressa of Sayed Ahmad Saheb, where he performed his taraweeh salaah behind Qari Muhammad Taufeeq. This Qari Saheb was at that time a teacher of tajweed (in Medina) and recited two paras daily in slow and easy fashion. In this way the taraweeh would finish about 5 O'clock in Saudi Arabian time, which corresponds with our time of about a quarter past twelve. Thereafter, at about 6 O'clock Medina time, he settled down to rest for the night. Moulvi Zakarya had been given the order to wake him up at 8 O'clock. Moulvi Saheb explains:

"Throughout Ramadan it only happened once or twice that on waking him up, that he was not already awake. Otherwise as soon as it was eight O'clock, I would see Hazrat already performing wudoo or istinja. At that time Hazrat listened to two paras being daily recited on the qiraa't of Imam NAAFI'. He had a great liking to listen to Imam Naafi's qiraa't. Two students from the Madressa were appointed for that."

Then on the evening of the 27th Ramadan he was overtaken by fever, which continued to plague him till his death... Before that in 1338 H while on boat towards Hejaz for Haj, the crescent of Ramadan was sighted on the boat. At that time, in spite of dizziness and extreme tiredness, taraweeh was performed diligently, and even then the practice of Quranic recitations started in earnest. Moulvi Zakarya accompanied him on this journey. During the first eight rakaat, Hazrat recited half a para where after Moulvi Zakarya in the next twelve rakaat recited 3/4 paras.

They arrived in Mecca on the 10th Ramadan. There, Hazrat performed taraweeh behind a Qari Saheb and completed his own khatam in nafl salaah. On this journey, the group arrived in Jeddah at Maghrib time. The whole group was so tired that, let alone taraweeh, even the fard salaahs were performed with extreme difficulty; so exhausted were they. In spite of that, Hazrat performed some of the taraweeh rakats standing up and some while seated. By Allah, this man had courage and perseverance and this courage and perseverance were some of his beautiful qualities. In what words can this Allah-given gift be adequately described - actions which left one dumb struck in admiration for him!

TAZKIRA-E-KHALEEL:

In 'AAP BETI' I have mentioned how on the boat en route to Haj, Hazrat suffered such dizziness that he could hardly lift his head from the pillow. The same was the case with me in spite of my comparatively youthful age. Apart from that there was a considerable amount of vomiting also. The bad smells of the boat, especially when it was being filled with petrol (diesel) caused one to become dizzy, nauseous and induced vomiting.

On the 29th Sha'baan he told me: "Bhai, what is to become of taraweeh?"

I replied: "Hazrat, I will perhaps be able to bear the dizziness and the turning of my head, but what will happen if during the salaah I should start vomiting?"

He replied: "That is all right. If you should vomit, then just go and perform wudoo once again."

The boat was a small one and used to roll about a lot. In spite of the rolling about, which made standing up quite an ordeal, and in spite of dizziness and extreme weakness and exhaustion, Hazrat performed taraweeh standing up: when we arrived at Jeddah, as related by Moulvi Meeruty, we were completely exhausted, so much so, that we could hardly stand up. Haji Maqbul Ahmed Saheb (May Allah pardon him), said to me in a very angry voice:

"Do not allow this venerable old man to stand up in taraweeh salaah. Think about his weakness and have consideration for his welfare."

I honestly feared what Haji Saheb would do to me if I should go against his order. He used to eat with Hazrat and me. I was thus in quite a dilemma. He wanted me to tell Hazrat that I had no strength left in me for taraweeh. This I could not do, and I did not want to antagonise Haji Saheb and further rouse his anger. But then Hazrat himself asked: "And now Bhai Zakarya what is your opinion about taraweeh"."

Out of fear of Haji Saheb I replied: "Hazrat, I am very tired."

The taraweeh commenced and my shame and sorrow knew no bounds when I saw how Hazrat performed the whole taraweeh with so much ease and comfort. I glanced in his direction time and again to see if he was still all right and felt exceedingly sorry for myself for having answered him in the way that I did. Time and again I wanted to explain to him that I merely pretended to be exhausted out of fear of Haji Saheb, but fear of Haji Saheb withheld me.

I can still remember quite vividly that twice or thrice I drew near to him with the intention of explaining to him that it was out of consideration for his own weakness and exhaustion that I had tried to excuse myself. But I feared Haji Saheb. I feared that he would be displeased with me. However the sorrow is with me to this day.

THE RAMADAN OF MAULANA RASHEED AHMAD GANGOHI:

I have written in AAP BETI No 6 under the heading of spiritual exertion, that while dictating the practices of Hazrat Rasheed Ahmad Gangohi in Ramadan, I wanted to note it down because of its relevance to the subject. There I wrote:

"His extreme exertion in spiritual exercises were such that onlookers felt pity for him. Such was he that in Ramadan, even when his age had advanced beyond seventy, he fasted the whole day and then in Owabeen, instead of six rakats, he used to perform twenty rakats, during which he never recited less than approximately two paras. So long did he stay in ruku and sujood that onlookers thought that he had forgotten himself. On finishing this salaah, he proceeded homeward to partake of the evening meal. Even during this time too he would not remain idle, but en route and waiting for the food etc, he also finished reciting several paras.

Soon he would commence Esha salaah and taraweeh, which did not take less than an hour or an hour and a quarter at least. Thereafter he would lie down at about half past ten only to rise again at about two O'clock or half past two for tahajjud. At times his attendants and assistants found him performing wudoo at one O'clock. At this time of the night he used to spend 2-1/2 hours to three hours in tahajjud. Sometimes it happened that an attendant would go to him at five O'clock to join him for sehri and would find him in salaah.

After Fajr he remained busy reciting wazeefas, wirds and engrossed in meditation until eight O'clock or half past eight. Then it was time for Ishraq salaah. Thereafter for a few hours he would rest.

During this time the mail would arrive and he would begin answering letters and writing fatwas or dictate them. Thereafter it was time for Salatul-Duhaa (Chasht), and on performing this salaah, he would have his daytime sleep.

After Zuhr salaah he usually closed the door of his private room and busied himself with the recitation of the Quran until Asr time. Note that in the year for which this was his practices, he was suffering from extreme old age and various other sicknesses to such an extent that to walk from the toilet to his room - a mere fifteen paces - he became so tired that he had to sit down somewhere along the

way to rest. In spite of this condition he never performed fard or nafl salaahs sitting down, but remained standing for hours. On several occasions attendants implored him: “Hazrat, today you should perform taraweeh from the sitting position. This seems quite appropriate.”

He always replied: “No! that is a sign of lack of courage and perseverance.”

All I can say is this that it is no easy task to be a true follower of him who is reported to have answered:

“Shall I then not be a grateful slave?”

During Ramadan there was a marked increase in his ibadat and exertion especially as far as his recitation of the Quran was concerned. Even when going to and from his house he never spoke. If an estimate of the total amount of his daily recitations in and out of salaah is made, it comes to about half a khatam of the Quran daily. On the morning of the first day of fasting he used to say:

“From today all noises of conversation shall cease. If any man allows Ramadan to be wasted, it is a great sorrow indeed.”

Now, what was his diet for such severe efforts? So little did he eat for the whole of Ramadan that the total of it all amounted to less than five 'seer’ (5kg) of grain. In his biography - “TAZKIRA-E-RASHEED” written by the successor (khalifa) of the Imam Rabbani, Hakeem Is-haq Saheb, his Ramadan habits are discussed:

“During Ramadan he used to emerge from his private resting place late in the morning. In summer he generally came out about ten O’clock because he used to greatly increase his nafl salah, tilawat of the Quran, his moments of silence and meditation as compared with other months. In this time he slept very little, spoke very little, only retiring after Maghrib for a while to eat something. Initially he himself used to lead all twenty raka-’ah s of taraweeh salaah and later performed it behind his son, Hafiz Hakeem Muhammad

Mas’ood Saheb. After that he performed two long raka-’ahs of nafl salaah, sometimes standing up and sometimes sitting down, thereafter remaining seated for a long time facing the Qibla and reciting. Thereafter he performed one sajdah-e-tilawat and stood up. From hearing some of the word he recited softly, I deduced that he recited Surah Mulk, Surah Sajdah and Surah Dukhaan.

He usually fasted the ten days of Zi1 Haj, the days of Ashura and the middle of Sha’baan.”

TAZKIRA-E-RASHEED:

My late father on many occasions told the following story:

"During Hazrat's last Ramadan I led the taraweeh prayers (for him and his attendants). It so happened that because of some reason or other, Hazrat's son, Hakeem Muhammad Mas'ood was unable to perform it."

For quite some days before the commencement of Ramadan Hazrat said:

"Mas'ood Ahmad Saheb is indisposed and not available to lead taraweeh prayers. Who is going to recite the Quran for us in Taraweeh?"

On every occasion I wanted to offer my services and declare my readiness, but out of respect I refrained from doing so. Two days before Ramadan Hazrat said:

"Moulvi Yahya Saheb, you are also a hafiz of the Quran?

I replied: Yes Hazrat, I am indeed. But I recite the Quran in a Persian tone. You are used to hearing the recitation of Hakeem Mas'ood Ahmad Saheb, who is indeed a fine Qari."

Hazrat replied: "No, I have already heard your recitation. You shall lead in taraweeh."

My father says: "On the first day it was a great burden for me. By way of preparation, I had to recite one and a quarter para of the Quran by looking into the Quran. I had memorised the Quran at the age of seven. Thereafter for six months I had to look into the Quran and daily recite one full khatam. And since then I have never looked into the Quran to recite it. The first day, in order to prepare myself properly, I recited 1-1/4 paras from the Quran, but from the second day onwards the fear, nervousness and anxiety disappeared. Thereafter there was no further need to look into the Quran."

My late father (May Allah fill his resting place with noor) was indeed a very good hafiz with tremendous energy to recite the Quran by heart. He had a bookshop where he himself made up the parcels to be posted, and wrote the addresses himself. While doing that he was all the time reciting the Quran in audible fashion without ever becoming confused or struggling over the 'mutashaabihaat'.

Maulana 'Ashiq Ilahi writes about him in "TAZKIRA-E-KHALEEL':

“Once upon my request he was invited to Meerut to lead taraweeh prayers and recite the Quran in Ramadan. I saw that wherever he went, he was all the time busy reciting by himself so that he finished a whole khatam daily. When it was time for Iftar, he was reading: “Qul a’oothu bi rabbinnaas...”

When he arrived by rail at Meerut it was Esha time. Being a man who was continuously in a state of wudoo, he entered the mosque and immediately proceeded to the musallah to lead the prayers and in three hours recited ten paras so clearly, without any struggling over difficult patches as if the Quran was an open book in front of him. So comfortable was his pace of recitation, that he completed a full khatam of the Quran in three nights and departed. So good a hafiz was he that there was no need to revise his reading beforehand; neither was there any need for someone to stand behind him and listen with a view to correct if needed.”

My father also used to say about this visit to Meerut: “When the word got around in Meerut that a certain man was coming to complete a full khatam of the Quran in salaah within three days, thirty or fourty hafizes arrived from far and wide to stand behind him and test him.”

My late father never had trouble with fever in Ramadan like myself. On the invitations and insistence of friends, he often went to their places to finish a khatam in two or at the most three nights before returning home. In mosques he generally did it in three nights and in other ibadat-khanas he generally did so in two or even in one night. Once on the invitation of the late Shah ZAHID HUSSAIN he completed a khatam at Shah Saheb’s house in two nights.

I can still remember his recitation in the Nawab-wali Masjid in Qasaabpura, Delhi. A certain Moulvi Naseeruddin was busy performing taraweeh in the Hakeem Ishaq Masjid. At that time my father arrived in Delhi from somewhere. He went to rest a little in the resting place of Hakeem Ishaq attached to the Masjid. It so happened that Moulvi Naseeruddin was reciting the 14th para and making heavy weather, so that he had to be corrected time and again. My father went into the Masjid and as soon as Moulvi Naseeruddin gave the next salaam, he asked him to vacate the spot, and he himself took over. In the next sixteen rakaats he recited sixteen paras. No doubt, the musallis must have found the going tiring and exhausting. But it is a fact that people are more pleased with finishing the Quran quickly than they are worried about a bit of hardship. To have been able to finish the Quran on the 12th night made them forget their exhaustion.

I can also remember his recitation of the Quran in the house of Ummi Bi in Kandhla. She is Amatur Rahman, the daughter of Maulana Muzaffar Hussain, my father’s maternal grandmother who became known as Ummi Bi. In answer to a

special request he remained reciting the Quran throughout the night in nafl prayers. Because of the fact that according to us (Hanafis) it is not permissible to have more than four muqtadees in nafl prayers, the ladies behind him had to be changed continuously, while my father continued reciting.

My late uncle (Maulana Ilyaas) also used to visit Kandhla in Ramadan because of the presence there of Ummi Bi. At such times the Quran khatam used to be completed in about one single night. At such times he performed Esha salaah in the Masjid and thereafter go to the house of Ummi Bi to perform taraweeh there from after Esha until sehri time, thereby completing fourteen or fifteen paras. Maulana Raooful Hasan Saheb is the uncle of my late father and the father of my late wife. His story has already been mentioned in 'AAP BETI' under the heading: TAQWA. On the 30th Ramadan he recited from Alif Laam Meem until Qul a-'oothu bi rabbil falaq... in one single raka-'ah and in the second raka-'ah he recited only Surah ... al Naas! Then at sehri time he told his mother Ummi bi:

"I have now performed two raka-'aha. Will you now perform the other eighteen?"

During all that time the mother listened to the Quran while standing, behind him in the salaah!

(The above is quite relevant to the subject under discussion and also refers to the Ramadan of the Elders. That is why it is mentioned here).

THE RAMADAN OF MAULANA QASIM NANOTWI:

Unfortunately I could not ascertain the details of how Hazrat Moulana Muhammad Qasim Nanotwi spent his Ramadan and today there is no one alive who will be able to supply us with that Haj journey of 1277 when he memorised the whole Quran. He daily memorised one para, which was then recited in taraweeh that evening.

Maulana Muhammad Yaqoob Nanotwi writes in 'SAWANEH Qasmi' that in Jamadil Thani 1277 H Maulana Qasim departed for Haj and arrived in Mecca at the end of Zil-Qada. He arrived in Medina for ziyarat after Haj in Safar and only returned to arrive in Bombay at the end of Rabi-ul-Awwal. At home he arrived by Jamadul-Thani.

On the way to Mecca he boarded a ship at Karachi. They saw the moon for Ramadan from the boat. Immediately they saw the moon Hazrat started memorising the Quran and reciting it in taraweeh that night. After Eid on reaching Mukalla (In Yemen) he bought Muscati sweetmeats and distributed it among his friends on the occasion of completing the khatam. Before that time on one was

aware of the fact that he was memorising the Quran. It was only afterwards that he told them that he had been doing that for two years during Ramadan.

In memorising the Quran he did l-1/4 paras daily. Thereafter he repeated it numerous times. Having memorised it fully, he once recited twenty-seven paras in one raka-'ah. If it so happened that anyone followed him in nafl salaah, he made salaah after that raka-'ah and prohibited the follower from doing so. Thereafter he would continue to recite throughout the night."

SAWANIH QASMI:

According to the most authentic version of the story he memorised the Quran in one year in Ramadan, but according to another version, he did so in two Ramadhan. From the fact that he memorised 1-1/4 para' at a time daily, it seems that in the first year he had memorised a considerable part of the Quran and finally completed it the following year when he was en route to Haj. This was the time when he completed the khatam

THE RAMADAN OF HAZRAT HAJI IMDADULLAH SAHEB:

The general Ramadan habits and practice of Haji Imdadullah Saheb has been described by Maulana Thanvi in his book: 'IMDADUL MUSHTAAQ.' Haji Saheb is reported to have said:

"I am saying this by way of exhorting others to good works that this humble soul in his younger days never slept by night especially in Ramadan. After Maghrib, two young boys Hafiz Yusuf, the son of Hafiz Daumin Saheb and Hafiz Ahmad Hussain Saheb, my nephew, recite one and a quarter paras each for me in salaah until Esha. And after Esha two others recite for me. Thereafter another Hafiz Saheb leads me in salaah, reciting the Quran until the middle of the night and finally after that two more hafizes recite the Quran for me in tahajjud salaah. In this manner the whole night passes by."

IMDADUL MUSHTAAO:

THE RAMADAN OF HAZRAT ABDUL RAHEEM RAIPURI SAHEB

The Ramadan of Hazrat Shah Abdul Raheem Raipuri is also described in TAZKIRA-E-KHALEEL. He was a man with tremendous love and zeal for the teaching of the Quran, for which purpose he was instrumental in the erection of numerous Quranic schools in the rural areas and in and around the district of Dehradun (Northern India).

He had great love for the recitation of the Quran. He was himself a hafiz and it was one of his general habits to spend practically the whole of the night in tilawat. Of the whole twenty-four hours of the day it was hardly ever that he slept for one hour during the night. He loved solitude and felt depressed at the presence of people in his company as it robbed him of the opportunity of tilawat. The time between Asr and Maghrib was set aside for meeting the public (as was the time from 9 to 10 in the morning).

Apart from these times, except if it was for a special necessity, he did not meet anyone. He generally kept the door of his room closed and enjoyed his solitude when he was in contact and communication with his Lord and Master alone.

As far as his diet is concerned he was a man who ate very simply and so little but in Ramadaan he ate even less. So ascetic was his life that onlookers felt pity for him in view of his heavy spiritual exertion. During Ramadaan even the majlis gatherings in the morning and the afternoon after Asr were cancelled. At sehri time he hardly consumed a cup of tea and a piece of roti.

Initially Hazrat used to perform and lead taraweeh himself. He would finish it at about 2.30 a.m. Later his body became so weak that instead of being a reciter, he was forced to become a listener. Apart from his own recitations, he also used to listen to the Quran recited three or four times over.

Because Ramadan was a time when he remained awake throughout the night and because his main activity at this time was tilawat, the coming and going of visitors was suspended during Ramadan.

(In spite of what was said above, the fact of the matter is that the coming and going of visitors was in fact greatly increased during Ramadan. But there was no arrangement as before for meeting Hazrat and for conversation. Those who came to visit were merely allowed to see him as he proceeded to and from his house to the Mosque without direct contact or conversation) (Zakarya)

Even his office was closed in Ramadan for the whole month (except for very rare urgent cases). Any letter arriving at that time would only be read to him and he answered after Eid. Hazrat was a man who was continuously busy with zikrullah. This was his actual spiritual food. It was through this zikr that he received that inner and physical strength, which no medicine can provide.

As has already been said, Ramadan was a time when numerous visitors came along without the opportunity of meeting him directly. Many were sincere seekers after the true spiritual life. Being people who loved him, they had to confine themselves to seeing him as he came and went to the mosque. As for those on

whom he had directed his spiritual attentions, and were in need thereof, longing for it, this was a trying time as they felt deprived.

In ‘AAP BETI’ while discussing the ‘Declaration of Allah’s favours’, I wrote:

“During the last Ramadan of the life of my father, I desired to spend Ramadan 1334 H with Hazrat Raipuri (and wrote to him.) Hazrat wrote back: ‘In Ramadan I do not go anywhere and I do not meet anyone. Please remain where you are and continue your good works there.”

Thereafter I asked for permission to come to him during the last ten days. The reply is quoted in ‘AAP BETI’.

“The same reason that I had for not giving permission for you to be here at the beginning of Ramadan, prevails at the end of Ramadan. But it seems, you and your father are exerting force upon me, and if so, what is there that poor ones like myself can do? This seems like mere coercion from you. I have already given my reply. Further, whatever zikr Hazrat Moulana had commanded, continue with that.”

On reading this letter my late father said:

“If you go there, Hazrat’s solitude will be interfered with and he will have to worry about your food, drink etc. so do not worry him and put him into difficulty.

THE RAMADAN OF SHAIKHUL HIND MAULANA MAHMOODUL HASAN SAHEB:

A few words have already been mentioned in “FADAA-IL-RAMADAN” about the Ramadan practices of Hazrat Shaikhul-Hind. Hazrat Shaikhul-Islam Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani writes in his book “SAFARANAMA-E-ASEER MALTA” (Travels of the prisoner of Malta):

“Because of the fact that Ramadan in Taaif (Saudi Arabia) was a time of great unrest and upheavals, people could not obtain the necessary foodstuffs they needed and neither could they perform the taraweeh salaah in the mosques. The masjid of Hazrat Sayyiduna Ibn Abbaas is the largest masjid in the area and even there too taraweeh was performed from “Alam tara kayfa”. Even then too very few people attended, while the rest either prayed in their local mosques or at home.

All this was because bullets were flying around at all times. Initially Maulana also performed his salaah in the Masjid of Ibn Abbas, but because the road leading to it

was one where a lot of firing took place, it became increasingly more dangerous to go there. Then also it so happened that just after Maghrib salaah, while they were still performing nafl salaah, the Bedouins launched an attack on the Turkish soldiers on the roof and at the doors and minarets of the masjid. The people in the masjid had to hide in the corners of the masjid as bullets were raining everywhere for quite a long time. No taraweeh was performed. Only a few people performed their Esha salaah when there was a lull in the shooting.

Thereafter some of Hazrat's friends and attendants insisted that he should not continue going to the masjid, but should instead attend the masjid nearest to where he resided. This is what he subsequently did for his fard salaahs. At that time there too taraweeh was only performed from "Alam tara kayfa", but Maulana remained in the masjid until sehri time performing nafl salaah. Maulana Uzair Ghul Saheb and myself also remained busy with nafl salaah. As it was summer time sehri was quite early.

Then, on returning, some food was prepared, which consisted mainly of sweetened rice. No sugar was available and honey was used to sweeten the rice and tea. Most of the time rice was cooked without any meat. Even rice was extremely difficult to obtain in Taaif. A piece of roti, which normally cost one anna, was sold for about eight annas. Fortunately a trader from Delhi, the late Janab Haroon Saheb, had sent a present of some rice, which was of a very high quality and proved to be very useful. During that period of about two months, we spent about ten or twelve pounds."

ASEER-E-MALTA:

Maulana Sayed Asghar Hussain Saheb writes in "SAWANIH SHAIKHUL HIND" Ramadan was a very special time for Hazrat Shaikhul Hind, during which he remained in ibadat day and night. He never busied himself with anything else. During the day he did relax a bit, but the major part of the night was spent in listening to the Quran in salaah. (Hazrat Shaikhul Hind was not a hafiz). A few hafizes were appointed to recite to him in salaah. If they were from somewhere else out of town, arrangements were made for their boarding and lodging as well as their expenses. Sometimes he even insisted that the late Moulana Hafiz Ahmad, the Rector of Darul Uloom, Deoband, recite the whole Quran for him a few times. Sometimes he made Hafiz Anwarul-Haq, with whom he had a close relationship, recite to him as he followed in salaah. At other times his younger brother, Moulvi Muhammad Hussain did the reciting. Sometimes his nephew, Moulvi Mohammad Haneef recited and during the latter part of his life it was mostly Moulvi Kifayatullah.

After taraweeh he normally sat down and talked to his visitors and friends on some

points of knowledge and the achievements and spiritual advancement of the saintly Elders. Thereafter it was his habit to relax for a few minutes.

Thereafter it would be time for the hafizes to recite about two to four paras, after which they would go to rest. But Hazrat would not go to rest, as another Hafiz would come forward to recite their paras and move off.

The reciters changed while for hours the Shaikh remained standing to listen to them in salaah, sometimes right through the night until sehri.

Sometimes he performed his salaah in the masjid, and then returned home for taraweeh with a jama'at of friends and attendants. In this manner two or four or six or even ten paras were recited in one night. On finishing taraweeh, some hafizes would come forward to commence nafl salaah and the pleasure of listening to the Quran being recited would continue throughout the night. When because of the length of time spent in standing in salaah, his feet became swollen; attendants would feel sorrow and anxiety, while Hazrat himself would rejoice because of the fact that he had been able to follow the practice of Rasulullah (SAW) whose feet became swollen under similar circumstances.

Once during Ramadan, due to little food, little sleep and long standing in salaah, he became very weak and his feet badly swollen, but still he could not rest until he could hear the Quran recited profusely. The women in the house became so worried that they begged Moulvi Kifayatullah to make some excuse and recite much less than normal. Moulvi Saheb recited only a little and complained of some ailment or other. Hazrat used to be very conscious of the comfort of others and in this case immediately agreed that he be let off.

Hafiz Saheb went into his room to sleep. A short while later, Hafiz Saheb felt someone having quietly entered the room, busy pressing his legs! When he woke up fully, he discovered that it was Hazrat Shaikhul Hind himself. He felt extremely ashamed and embarrassed, jumped up and tried to avoid being treated so kindly. Moulana told him: "No Bhai, there is no harm. After all you are not feeling well. This will give you some comfort."

SAWANIH SHAIKHUL HIND:

In another place Sayed Saheb writes:

"After taraweeh in Ramadan he came into the precincts o' Darul Uloom during those blessed night. Both the students and teachers gathered to listen to words of spiritual wisdom. More than half the night passed in this. Alas! Who would have thought that this was the last time and that his final departure was near at hand?"

THE RAMADAN OF HAKEEMUL UMMAT MAULANA ASHRAF ALI THANVI:

Even at the time when I was writing “VIRTUES OF RAMADAN” I tried to acquire through friends the information of how Hazrat Thanvi spent his Ramadan. I consider it my ill fortune that I could never spend Ramadan in Hazrat Thanwi’s company.

During Hazrat Thanwi's lifetime I wrote a letter to brother Khwaja Azizul Hasan Saheb, which is quoted in AAP BETI as well as in this booklet, where I discussed the Ramadan of Hazrat Saharanpuri. And even now while I write this, I have asked various persons, who had spent some part of Ramadan or all of it in Hazrat’s company, but to date I have not been fortunate enough to obtain this information. However in “MA’MOOLAAT ASHRAFIA ” this article appeared:

“During Ramadan Hazrat himself used to recite the Quran in taraweeh. Without any good reason as an excuse he never left it. He used to recite l-1/4 paras per night up to the first half of Ramadan and then one para per night, finishing a khatam on the 27th night.

The beauty of Hazrat’s recitation could he fully appreciated by listening to him. He recited with 'tarteel’, which is normally found in the recitation of the ordinary salaahs. If for some reason or other he did recite fast, it was still done with full consideration for the correctness of the pronunciation of ‘huroof’ in the same manner as if he was reciting slowly. As far as his consideration for ‘waqafs’ and tuning were concerned, this was definitely such as most readers do not have. His memory was good and it was only very seldom that he ever became confused by ‘mutashaabihaat’.

His relationship with the Quran was such that one got the impression as if he was reciting with the Quran open in front of him. If ever, he was asked where such-and-such a verse was, he would immediately reply correctly.

While in Kanpur, so many people came for taraweeh behind him that those who came to perform Maghrib and only returned to the mosque after having gone home to eat something could not find place inside the mosque. So great was the crowd that there was difficulty in performing the sajdah-e-tilawat. Because of not knowing what was going on, there was danger that the salaah of some musallis became spoiled. For this reason he once acted upon the mas’alah, that if shortly after reciting the sajdah, one goes into ruku, then the sajdah-e-tilawat would be considered to have been performed together with the sujood of the salaah. In any

case in spite of Hazrat's comfortable style of recitation, his salaah was not unduly longer than the salaah of others.

During Ramadan Hazrat generally performed iftar in the Madressa together with his guests. Azaan used to be called at the first correct moment of Maghrib. Iftar was then performed without haste and after rinsing the mouth and washing the hands, the salaah was performed without any rush. So much time was allowed to pass between azaan and the salaah that if anyone wished to perform his wudoo comfortably, he would still not miss the first takbeer. The people living in the vicinity of the mosque could perform their iftar at home and still come to the mosque to join the salaah at the first takbeer.

After having performed Maghrib salaah together with the 'wazeefas' according to his normal practice, he ate his evening meal. Then near the time for Esha he would rise. Taraweeh was performed at a comfortable pace. In the rest periods in between every four raka-'ahs ('tarweehas') he recited the sunnat zikr. The length of the ruku and the sujood in taraweeh was of the same length as during the other salaahs. During tahajjud Hazrat sometimes recited audibly and sometimes softly.

If during I'tikaaf he was performing tahajjud prayers and some persons happened to join him, he did not prohibit them. On the other hand he never made special arrangements with special announcements of Tahajjud being performed with jama'at. In fact, once I saw that when he woke up late for Tahajjud, he recited the stipulated amount in two raka-ahs and then said: "Go and eat your sehri, and if thereafter there is still time left, complete your Tahajjud."

After Tahajjud, he normally rested until Fajr. After Fajr, the normal activities of the day began. He sometimes performed I'tikaaf, sometimes for the full ten days and sometimes for three days. While in I'tikaaf his writing activities continued as before. For example, the book 'Qasdus Sabeel' was written within eight days in I'tikaaf, another book-'AI Futooh Feema Yata 'Allaqu Bir Rooh' was also written during those days together with 'Qasdus Sabeel'.

Once I (Hakeem Muhammad Mustafa) visited Thana Bhavan on the 28th of Ramadan. I reckoned that the khatam would have been finished by then, as that was the general practice in most Mosques that it finished on the evening of the 27th. There appeared to be no special changes in the Mosque from what is normal. Hazrat started reciting from 'Wadduhaa" in Taraweeh which gave me the impression that Khatam was to be on that night as he always started from there on the khatam night. When he recited 'Bismillah.' at the beginning of 'Iqra' I knew for certain that it was to be khatam and so it was, then after the khatam, dua was made and in the dua there was no extra dua longer than normal. In the Mosque was one lamp burning, the same as burnt daily, no other. Most definitely were there more

people, not more lights or sweetmeats. A certain person sought permission to distribute sweetmeats, but Hazrat refused saying: "Not today, but if you so wish, you may do so tomorrow." On this night, Hazrat recited the first part of Surah Baqarah until muflihoon at the end of his khatam.

Ma'moolaat Ashrafiyya:

In 'Husnul Aziz' Vol. 1, regarding the sayings of the saints in Ramadan 1334 Hijri, Hazrat Thanvi (Rahmatullah Alayh) himself writes, while switching his political discussion to one of preaching:

"During that time, the month of Ramadan with all its innumerable blessings dawned upon us. This is a time when usually one's relationship and meetings with others are limited to a minimum. But for me this was especially the case and as a result of ill health, the Juma lectures for the whole month had been entrusted to someone else.

For Taraweeh Salaah too, someone else has been appointed. And unlike in the past, no teaching of any new class has been started. Even in zikr and teachings a postponement has been declared, which was also the case last year. Hence, this Ramadan has been one without any contacts and meetings. Therefore, for the sake of implementing this resolution, this month has been most suitable. Thus, in the name of Allah I exchange the ways of political involvement towards ways of preaching, seeking help from Allah in this endeavour..."

Thereafter Hazrat Thanvi (Rahmatullah Alayh) writes thus:

"At iftar time you should eat very little so that at sehri time you will be able to eat with a sound appetite... If I eat any extra things like mangoes, etc., I do so after Taraweeh so that I do not feel any heaviness and difficulty in Taraweeh. After all, during Ramadan some extra delicacies are definitely put in front of you. Someone will bring mangoes, another will bring some other fruit and even at home some extra things are prepared. Even the hadith says:

"It is the month wherein the rizq of a believer is greatly increased... "

For me there are no extra Ibadat in Ramadan. Otherwise there will be confusion in my time schedule. In these times all other Ibadat are of less significance in the face of Fasting and Taraweeh. It is as a result of my own lack of courage and resourcefulness that I say this by way of excuse that all other Ibadat are faded in the face of Taraweeh and Fasting, as if the full blessings of Ramadan are still obtainable by me through these two. Having listened to the Quran recited from Qari Saheb, I proceed home to lead the ladies of the household for four rakaats,

reciting the Quran to them. Thereafter, I lie down for a while till twelve o'clock. Then I wake up at half past two for sehri, where after, normally I do not sleep until Fajr time."

Hazrat always had great difficulty in falling asleep. Sometimes it did happen that he fell asleep at that time and sometimes not. He always used to complain about this, but even if he did not fall asleep he went to lie down for about two hours. He himself says:

"In this way I call it sleep but if I should really speak the truth, I may take the courage and say that I am awake the whole night apart from two hours while I sit and read a bit. But perhaps the reason for not having that courage is this that my nafs will not be able to boast that I have stayed awake the whole night."

When someone asked him whether the fact that extra Ibadat is being performed in Ramadan, is not contrary to the generally accepted view that one should be constant (in the same) ibadat, while being punctual therein, he replied:

"Should one increase his normal actions in Ibadat in Ramadan, it will not be contrary to the order of constancy (but with regularity), because in the first place, the intention is not made to be constant in that (increased form). The hadith teaches us that Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam himself increased his devotions during Ramadan."

ANFAAS EESA:

In one place, Moulvi Hakeem Muhammad Yusuf Binnory (Rahmatullah Alayh) writes:

"During this year 1337 Hijri, I stayed in Thana Bhavan and in Ramadan from the first night to the last, I joined the Taraweeh jama'at. Hazrat Thanvi (Rahmatullah Alayh) was a man who followed the Sunnat in every aspect; I would like to sketch the Taraweeh behind him so that those who may read this will be able to follow the Sunnat.

At Hazrat's place the azaan for Esha was called one hour and forty minutes after the setting of the sun. The jama'at commenced a quarter of an hour later. No long qiraa't was recited during the Fard Salaam. Often it was "Watteeni" or "Alam tara kayfa" that was recited. In the Taraweeh the qiraa't was quite longer, but every letter was correctly pronounced with full consideration for 'izhaar' and 'ikhfa' etc. Initially, he recited one and a quarter paras per night and thereafter lessened the amount, finishing on the 27th night. For all the prayers of Esha, Taraweeh and Witr a period of one and a half hours elapsed or something less than that. During

every resting period (tarweeha) after every four raka-ahs he recited Salawaat twenty five times in a soft audible voice. I once asked him about this zikr in the tarweehas and he replied:

"There is no fixed form of zikr in the tarweehas from the side of the Shariah. I recite Salawaat on Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam because in my opinion that is good and I recited it twenty five times so that if someone has to depart to do some necessary thing, like drinking water, he will be able to rejoin the Salaah before we restart."

After Taraweeh Hazrat made dua and then performed Witr. In the case of a Sajdah-e-tilawat Hazrat sometimes performed sujood and sometimes ruku. At the time of reciting Surah 'Iqra' he recited 'Bismillah' loudly and 'Qul huwallahu ahad' was recited only once. A person asked him about not reciting 'Qul huwallahu ahad' thrice and he replied: "The practice of reciting 'Qul huwallahu ahad' thrice is considered by some Ulema to be bid’ at and according to other it is permissible. Hence it is wrong to consider it to be 'mustahab'. Furthermore, the practice and custom of reciting it thrice has become a mere meaningless custom. A further discussion on this takes places somewhere else. In the hadith, we have a saying that Surah 'Qul huwallahu ahad' is equal to one third of the Quran and it does not say that it must be recited three times. Hazrat Shah Mohammad Is-haq Saheb has a fine answer for this. He says: "The hadith says that reciting 'Qul huwallahu ahad' gives one the reward of a third of the Quran. Reciting it three times gives us the reward of three thirds. But this does not mean that one will receive the reward for the whole Quran. It is just like someone reciting ten paras three times over. It is clearly understood that this recitation of the same ten paras three times over cannot be said to give the reward for the whole Quran."

After Taraweeh Hazrat usually left for home in accordance with his fixed habit.

There was never any increase in the number of lights or lamps in the Mosque neither were there any sweetmeats. After the khatam, Taraweeh for the last couple of nights was started first from 'Waaduha’ till the end, then from 'Alam tara kayfa', and on the last night from 'Amma yata saa-aloon’ till about the middle of the last para."

Thanks and praise be to Allah! In these we managed to acquire the knowledge of many habits of Hazrat Thanvi (Rahmatullah Alayh) during Ramadan. Allow me to write down one more incident, which too has already been mentioned in 'AAP BETI'.

The relationship between my father and Hazrat Thanvi (Rahmatullah Alayh) was one of informality and close friendship between contemporaries. My father could

from time to time relate interesting incidents concerning Hazrat Thanvi (Rahmatullah Alayh). Once during Ramadan he was the guest of Hazrat, and while he was there, he asked him: "At what time do you make iftar?" Hazrat replied, "After the stipulated time for iftar, I wait about three or four minutes till my heart is certain that the time is indeed in."

At that time special consideration was given for my father, who would look at his watch, and then check the skies time and again. Then, when he was certain of the time, he began eating together with his following saying: "You may continue to wait till your heart is certain."

In the meantime Hazrat Thanvi (Rahmatullah Alayh) and his attendants continued to wait and after a few minutes Hazrat said: "It seems that for as long as you are here, my heart will not be certain (and I will follow your view)."

After Taraweeh Hazrat Thanvi (Rahmatullah Alayh) asked: "What is your habit regarding the eating of sehri?"

My father answered: "I finished sehri so late that on finishing, I wonder whether my fast for the day is correct or not." (This is mere exaggeration because he normally finished eating sehri three or four minutes before Fajr).

Hazrat Thanvi (Rahmatullah Alayh) answered: "It is my habit to finish about one hour before Fajr."

Then my father said: "Well in that case you may eat at your own time and I will eat sehri at my time. It is not in me to fast for a day and a half."

Hazrat Thanvi (Rahmatullah Alayh) answered: "That will not do. If we are to eat we shall eat together. We will do this: One day you can carry the burden by eating at my time and the next day I will eat at your specified time."

The compromise was finally reached that sehri started about three quarters of and hour before Fajr, taking about fifteen to twenty minutes over the meal so that they finished about half and hour before Fajr.

AAP BETI No 4:

When I had written so far, the nazim of our Madressa Maulana al-Haaj Muhammad Asadullah Sahib sent me a note saying: "Regarding the question which you had sent to Khwaja Saheb, here are the answers as far as my knowledge goes.

No.6. Hazrat used to perform iftar together with the guests present.

No.8. As far as I can remember there was no change in his nafl Salaat as far as number and the kind thereof was concerned, after Maghrib.

No.9. He performed some rakaats and then did the rest while sitting down once asked him why he does so, sitting down, and he replied: "So that I do not get filled with pride and vanity and so that I do not let the fans continue to be waved."

Then I asked: "Why are the fan not waved in Salaam?" He replied: “I do not like it during Ibadat."

No.18. As regards the performing of Fajr at the onset of the greyness (isfaa there was no difference in Ramadan and out of it.)

No.21. In my knowledge Hazrat never made daur before performing Taraweeh Salaat.

No.22 According to my knowledge Hazrat most of the time made tilawat frat the Quran. He knew the Quran very well by heart. I have only seen two persons who knew the Quran to such an extent. One was Hazrat Maulana Thanvi (Rahmatullah Alayh) and the other was Qari Abdul Haq Saheb.

Once Hazrat said: “My special customs and habits in Ramadan are the same for other times. According to some people there are special habits at he time of iftar. For example, they will break the fast with dates and zam-zam. As for my habit at iftar time, I eat whatever is at hand, whether it be dates, zam-zam or hot water or guavas.”

IFAADAAT YOMIYA:

Having written so far, I received two letters from Moulana Zuhoorul-Hasan Saheb of Thana Bhavan to whom I had written previously requesting to be informed of Hazrat’s Ramadan habits. He also sent a message asking that his observations be added to the description of the customary habits of the elders. In the first letter dated 16th Jamad Thani he stated that because of the fact that I had written to him care of his son Moulvi Najmul-Hasan, who is a student at Mazahirul-Uloom, he is also replying care of his son:

“Dearly beloved Najmul Hasan,

The letter sent care of yourself by Hazrat Shaikhul Hadith had been received. You know that I only come home for a few hours at 10 or 11 o'clock in the morning and have to return before Asr. Therefore I am deprived of meeting Hazrat Shaikhul Hadith because the time when I am able to meet him is not his time for meeting people. Anyway I will try one of these days to remain for the night.

My memory is quite weak so that I am unable to report something word for word. What I am to relate here refers to Ramadaan 1349 H. I remember the letter sent to Khwaajah Saheb. At that time Hazrat referred to it in quite a few 'malfoozaat' in various ways. The uttering of his, which I wish to relate and which I remember quite vividly is this: He said:

"The customary habits which we are commanded to follow and implement in our lives, are those of the prophets. The habits of any 'Ummati' is not obligatory to follow. In fact the practice of noting them down and gathering them can from certain points of view be detrimental. Therefore to he on the search for them is not advisable. In gathering them and noting them down, there is one great potential evil. One of two things may happen. The deeds of the reader may be more or less than that of the Shaikh. If his deeds are more than that of the Sheikh, he may be discouraged from increasing his acts of righteousness. He may reason that if the acts of this Sheikh are so few - fewer than mine - why should we break and burden ourselves to do so much? And if the reader's acts are less than that of the Shaikh, it is possible that his courage will leave him (and he may not try to emulate the Shaikh)."

Hazrat also once said:

"What is so wonderful about what I do? My acts in and out of Ramadan are both the same. All my time is taken up by work and for this reason I do not find any extra time to do anything extra. I remain busy in and out of Ramadan with the same works."

In future if anything else should come to mind or any other uttering of Hazrat be remembered, I will also inform you.

Wassalaam."

Thereafter I received another letter from Moulana Zuhoorul-Hasan in connection with this subject. He wrote. "Once on discussing the non-advisability of noting down the habits of the elders, Moulana said:

"Because of the shortcomings in their understanding the general public look at the acts of the saintly ones, their staying awake by night, their zikr, tilawat as well as

the amounts and then they make these amounts of good works the criterion for judging the saintliness of the Elders. And thereby they place the Elders in ranks according to the quantity of the righteous deeds mentioned. When they see many such acts, they judge the doers thereof as being men of higher rank than those in whom they see less. And as a result of thus passing judgement on the Elders, they make themselves guilty of degrading the saintly ones. These so-called judges are completely ignorant of true inner qualities of deeds and ignore their great services to deen. They overlook the fact that these people are so busy with the fard 'kifaaya' of reforming the lives of people that they do not find the necessary time for increased zikr, tilawat and nightly spiritual vigils. And through their own established criteria they wrongly degrade such elevated persons from their lofty ranks with the results that these critics do themselves the disfavour by destroying their chances of success in the hereafter."

Once Hazrat Thanvi also said:

"To remain in tilawat and zikr after Fajr until 'Ishraq' and then to perform the salaah of 'Ishraq' brings the reward of one Haj and 'Umrah'. It is however possible that the reward for some acts may be even more. My feeling is that to take a walk at that time with the niyyat of preparing yourself with bodily strength for jihad according to the verse

'And Prepare for them what you can of Strength...' is an act of greater reward.

Thus it was Hazrat's customary habit to take a walk of about two miles daily after Fajr salaah. During this time he also recited about one manzil of the Quran as well as one manzil from 'MUNAAJAATE MAQBOOL.' Then he performed Salatul Ishraq. Because of the fact that this tilawat was done with deep understanding and pondering, he found the answers to many questions put to him for fatwas and answers on 'tasawwuf'. Many questions were thus solved, which during the walk he noted down with a pencil on paper. On arrival at home these were properly written down.

Outwardly this appeared to be a walk unconnected with zikrullah, wirds and wazeefas. But it was in fact an 'ilmi' and 'islahi' service, so much more higher than any ordinary recitation of 'wazeefas.

On the way from the 'khanqah' to his house he had the habit of exchanging pleasant talk with children, talking to them in their language, and drawing conclusions from their answers. Arriving at home, he executed the rights due to household members by talking to them in friendly and relaxing terms. Should any ladies be around as guests, he listened to them and gave 'islahi' advice by way of replies. It would have appeared that his whole life was one attached to worldly

affairs, while in fact; it was an act of reforming. This is why his acts were so much higher than mere recitations of 'wirds' and wazeefas.

If the general public were unaware of the depth and reality of Hazrat's deeds, then it is their lack of understanding. If you intend to print the details of the customary acts of the Elders for the reasons mentioned by you, you should also mention these few statements by Maulana Thanvi. Then the possibility of those defects becoming a reality will be eradicated and minimized, while the other side of the picture will appear before them. Otherwise, you have the right to decide as you wish

Wassalaam. ZUHOORUL HASAN. 18th Jamadul Thani.

Now we have had the customary habits of Maulana Thanvi as described in 'MAAMOOLAAT-E-ASHRAFIYYA' and 'HUSNUL AZIZ' etc. The fact that Maulana was at all times engrossed in activities uncovering and spreading knowledge as pointed out by Maulana Zuhoorul Hasan Saheb is very important indeed. Who can doubt that to be busy with such activities is so much more rewarding than the recitation of 'wazeefas'? Perhaps I have already mentioned how Hazrat Saharanpuri, while compiling BAZAL MAJHOOD even remained busy with this work while in I'tikaaf with his books for research being brought into the mosque. The reason for mentioning the various activities of various Elders during Ramadan is this that people of various tastes and appetites may find guidance from the acts of those Elders with whom they have a likeness and taste

The beauty and perfection of a bouquet of flowers lies in the fact that it is made up of various types of flowers. Should the bouquet consist of only one type of flowers, it can never be considered a bouquet of perfection. I have also written in my previous book - 'FADAA-IL-RAMADAN' that in the case of my late spiritual guide and mentor, Maulana Khalil Ahmad Saharanpuri, there was no great difference between his activities during Ramadan and out of Ramadan. I also wrote:

"The customary habits of the Elders are not mentioned that one may just read about them casually or that some remark of admiration or appreciation be made, but that out of one's own heart, courage be taken to follow their footsteps, and that to the best of one's ability one should try to emulate and imitate them, thereby to surpass others."

My own opinion about my Elders is not that I have great faith in them alone but rather this that while Rasulullah (SAW) is the complete embodiment of perfect human qualities, these Elders in their words and deeds were the very personification of the verse of poetry "You are indeed the wings of the various perfect qualities of the Rasool (SAW).

I have already also stated that I look upon my Elders as the sun and the full moons of hidayat in the same way as I wrote in ‘Khawan Khaleel’ regarding Moulana Hakeemul Ummat

“These are the ones, whose sleep is more virtuous than worship,

Their righteousness is the pride of Muslims.

It is fitting to their rank that they are heirs to the Prophet

And theirs is the responsibility of custodians of Islam.

Of this world they are, yet disconnected therefrom,

Like a swimmer in the ocean, whose clothes remain dry.

When in solitude they sit, they feel the joy of pleasant Company.

When the scholars join their company,

In respect they remain silent.”

I have also written about my Elders in these terms:

“These indeed are my fathers!

Can the earth ever bring forth the like of them?

When you shall bring together all of us?

O Counter of all creation!

O Lord, what wonderful types you have created!

That each one, instead of their hands being kissed,

Indeed their feet are worthy of kisses!

The second part of this verse was added by our Madressa’s Nazim,

Maulana As-adullah Sahib and l liked it very much. I say again: Like

the flower, contained in a bouquet, each one has its own beauty and

splendour, but the bouquet will only reach perfection when all the

various colours, fragrances and forms are blended.

THE RAMADAN OF SHAIKHUL-ISLAM MAULANA MADANI:

The Ramadan of 1365 H spent by Shaikhul-Islam, Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani in Sylhet has been related in great detail by Maulana Abdul Hameed A'zami in a special book. It contains much detail but I intend reproducing it here in concise form.

Of all the Ramadan activities of all our Elders no one's Ramadan has ever been written about with such detail. For this reason I felt that Maulana Madani's story should be told in full.

Maulana A'zami writes:

"Maulana Madani resided at the residence of the late Inspector Abdul Sattar Saheb and performed his daily prayers in the Main Masjid in Naya Sarak, which was situated about two furlongs away. It was here that a very large number of guests and friends gathered to spend Ramadan with him.

Because it was Hazrat's intention to remain in Sylhet for the full duration of Ramadan, he was no 'musafir' and as such he himself' led the daily prayers. After Zuhr he blew upon the numerous bottles of water placed all around the musallah for that purpose. Then he took out the many pleas and letters of questions, which had been placed under the musallah up to Zuhr time. On reading each one, he then would call the writer thereof to him and do for him whatever he could. Sometimes it would be the writing out of a 'ta'wiz'. If there were ones who desired to enter into 'bai-'at' with him, he would gather them all in one corner of the mosque, and after having given attention to all the other requests, he would initiate them into bai-'at. After a few words of advice and encouragement he then returned to his residence.

When Hazrat returned from the mosque, he sometimes lay down for a while to rest; otherwise he busied himself with tilawat. If some of his mail had not been fully attended to previously, he busied himself with that. It was also at this time that meetings by special appointments with him took place.

All this usually continued until Asr salaah when Hazrat, after the necessary preparations would once again leave for the mosque. Immediately after Asr salaah Hazrat made 'daur' with Maulana Abdul Jaleel Saheb, a lecturer at Darul Uloom Deoband. It was done in such a manner that Hazrat would first recite a quarter

para, which Maulana Abdul Jaleel would then repeat. If the ‘daur’ finished before Maghrib, Hazrat remained in meditation (muraqabah) until Maghrib, while the other visitors, and attendants remained busy with zikrullah.

For iftar there was generally dates and zam-zam plus fruits like pears, pomegranates, guavas, mangoes, coconut-water, paw-paws and rice as well as sweetened rice; even some fried eggs. However there never were the customary iftar foods of India like chana etc. I was under the impression that perhaps here they did not have the custom of eating chana etc at iftar time, but on investigating, found that the custom did in fact exist, except that people here considered those things to be of a lowly nature and inferior. And to place such things on Hazrat’s table sounded insulting to him in their eyes.

In any case, in spite of all these things in front of him, Hazrat’s iftar was of a very short duration. At the time of iftar there was always a scene of hustle and bustle, pleasure and happiness around him, but Hazrat himself generally was quiet and in deep thought. ("For the fasting one there are two joys...”

The place for iftar was very near the mosque, but so absorbed was he in thought and meditation, that at the time of iftar he had to be informed of the azaan, having already been called out.

(On many occasions of my visits to Deoband I have also seen this condition of Hazrat. People in his immediate presence will be busy, loudly discussing some political issue with raised voices and a lot of noise and Hazrat will remain silent until all of a sudden he will exclaim: “Aye-Aye!” From that I will deduce that he was completely unaware of what was going on around him and far away from his audience in his thoughts.)

Maulana A ’zami continues:

“Although there would be so many things in front of him, Hazrat only broke his fast with dates and zam-zam, where after he partook of a piece of fruit and drank some coconut-water. This was followed with a cup of tea. He always remained seated till the rest of the jama’at had finished eating, perhaps sometimes making one or two light-hearted comments. Iftar lasted from eight to ten minutes. Then Hazrat led the salaah, which was performed concisely. Afterwards he busied himself with two very long raka-’ahs of nafl salaah over which he took about half an hour. This in turn was followed by a long dua, in which the whole congregation joined.

If someone had invited him to a meal, he proceeded to the house of the host; otherwise he returned to his place of residence. For the evening meal two table

clothes were laid down - one for Hazrat and his attendants and followers who were used to eating roti (bread) and one for those guests, whose habit was to eat rice. Among those of his own party who also ate rice were his sons: Maulana As'a Saheb and Moulana Arshad and Rayhana. Hazrat used to say light-heartedly,

"I also have two Bengalis in my family. Give them some rice too."

Usually various kinds of rice were placed before them because the vast majority of the guests were Bengalis, whose staple food was rice. They know about 'pratha' (roti prepared with ghee) but are unacquainted with 'chapati' (thin dry roti) and no one among them knows how to prepare it. Together with some meat, it was almost a necessity that some sweetmeat also be available. Apart from 'Shahi tukre, halwa, there were paw-paws and these dishes were so immaculately prepared, that people from here will find difficulty in recognising it as being Bengali prepared... Although this is a land of abundant fish, I do not know why fish was not placed before us. A new type of food made from bamboo was also placed before us. On investigation, I discovered that their bamboo trees produce a 'gaunpa' from which the dish is prepared.

As is the case in Deoband and as is the Arab custom, a large round plate of curry was placed in front of Hazrat on the tablecloth with the guests sitting in a circle around it. A number of warm roti kept in a cloth was kept by his side and as was needed, he distributed these among the guests. If any guest finished eating from his own dish, then Hazrat would pick it up and clean it by eating whatever was left in it. If any pieces of roti were left lying around on the tablecloth, Hazrat would without any formality or shame pick them up and eat the pieces himself. From this the rest of the gathering got the full importance (of not leaving such pieces lying around).

Hazrat had the habit of sitting flat on the ground while eating. He kept the roti in his left hand while with the other he broke off small pieces to eat (with the curry). He always started off first and finished off last. At the end he drank tea.

All these details apply to when he was invited to eat out. If however there was no invitation, Hazrat left the mosque to proceed straight to his place of residence, where the food for the evening meal would have been prepared. There too two table-clothes were spread out for those whose preference was rice and those who preferred roti. Because the meal would finish sooner, he remained seated with the guests for a while to discuss some 'ilmi' mas'alah or something newsworthy. Then he rested for a short while.

It is a fact that Hazrat's special manner of Quranic recitation and his intense devotion, sincerity and humility in salaah is very well known and not only in India

but also in Arabia. Thousands came from far and wide because Hazrat himself led the salaah and the taraweeh. They came from afar to follow him and listen to him in taraweeh and tahajjud. Such people remained until Fajr and then departed for their villages." (Maulana Zakarya says: Whatever was written here about the qiraa-at of Maulana Madani and his salaah is absolutely true word for word. I must have had the good fortune of standing behind him in fard salaahs on hundreds of occasions, but I have never been able to spend Ramadan in his company. I have, however, stood behind him in fard salaahs twice - once in Ramadan of 1363 A.H when on his release from Allahabad jail, he arrived at Saharanpur on Sunday the 14th of Ramadan. At that time he left for Deoband on the next available train. He stayed there for the night only and travelled to Delhi the next day at 12 o'clock.

In that year my late uncle Maulana Ilyaas passed away on the 21st of Rajab and on arrival in Delhi he went straight to Nizamuddin for 'taziat' with the family, arriving there after Maghrib. At the time of taraweeh Hazrat said:

"Let him who is the Imam of this mosque lead the taraweeh salaah."

I said to him: "Hazrat, who is there that has the courage to lead taraweeh prayer when you are present. You will have to lead the taraweeh prayers."

After a bit of objection and refusal from him, he finally consented to lead the prayer, reciting from where he had previously ended his own recitation khatam - from the middle of the 14th para to the end of Surah Bani Israel, in twenty raka-'aha. He recited with such ease and comfort that the listeners enjoyed the pleasure thereof.

The second occasion was the very next year 1364 H when he performed the taraweeh prayers on Saharanpur station. He had just finished lecturing on Sahih Bukhari and the Khatam Bukhari took place on the 29th Sha'baan at 4 o'clock. That same day he left Deoband with his whole family arriving at Saharanpur station at about 12 o'clock the evening of the first Ramadan. Then, (while awaiting his train) he performed taraweeh at the station with a very large gathering. A large number of people from the Madressa and the town, who had by then already performed their taraweeh prayers, joined in with the niyyat of nafl. At that time he told me:

"Zakarya, come and stand near me. You will have to be the listener to correct me."

I replied: "Hazrat, it is no easy task to correct you. There are many hafizes in this crowd. Call a good one from among them to step forward."

Hazrat did not accept this and since that night this humble servant is proud to have been the correcting listener for that evening.

Moulvi Abdul Hameed writes further: “The crowd for taraweeh behind Maulana Madani was so big that as soon as the azaan was given, the mosque was filled to capacity, so that any arrivals thereafter could not find any place inside. A narrow lane was left among them so that Hazrat could proceed through it to the musallah. There the trustee of the mosque stood with a glass of water in his hand. This was necessary as Hazrat needed to rinse his mouth because he generally, after drinking tea, ate pan before getting into the car, which took him to the mosque.

Because of the vast crowd there used to be one or two ‘mukabbirs’, relaying his takbeers to the crowd and during the last ten days there were several of them.

In taraweeh 2-1/2 paras were recited in this manner that first Moulana Abdul Jaleel recited 1-1/4 paras in four raka-’ahs, followed by Hazrat Madani who then recited l-1/4 paras in sixteen raka-’ahs. The tarweehas were quite long. During the recitation it sometimes happened that he recited with such overwhelming ecstatic feeling, which moved the congregation visibly - such ecstacy, the pleasure of which only those who heard him can describe.

After taraweeh a long dua was made during which such crying and wailing could be heard, that the whole mosque echoed therewith. Thereafter Hazrat and his attendants drank tea and after about ten minutes, he began to lecture to the multitude of people present. Even people who had performed their taraweeh in other mosques came to listen to him. So full did the mosque become that there was not place for another soul; they even stood outside on the streets. As the voice could not reach up to there, arrangements were made for the use of a loudspeaker system.

During the course of the lecture, tea was served to the whole audience but it was all done in such silence that not a voice was heard and without anyone not receiving tea. The lecture generally had a theme of spiritual reform without any long discussion on political issues. Only here and there a few words on the politics of the day would enter the talk.

During the lecture various notes were sent forward with questions for him to answer and on hearing the questions read out to him, he replied in detail. When during the second half of Ramadan, he became a bit unwell, he let others give the lecture but he, in spite of not feeling well, remained seated till the end. At the end of the lecture, which lasted about an hour, people were allowed to come and shake hands with him. Although special arrangements were made, it still took quite a while before he reached the car to take him home.

On arrival at his residence, a light meal was served in which the whole group joined in. At about 1.30a.m this majlis ended and Hazrat went to his private room. At this time too he discussed certain matters with some close friends and attendants. Then he would sleep for about half an hour, where after he woke up for tahajjud prayers.

(The author says: “I too have seen many times how my Shaikh Maulana Khalil Ahmad Saharanpuri had complete control over his sleep. Whenever he wanted, he fell asleep and would wake up at whatever time he set himself to do so. There was no need for anyone to wake him up. In ‘AAP BETI’ I have already dealt with this in detail.”)

“When Maulana Madani had finished his toilet necessities and preparations, he proceeded to the mosque once more for tahajjud prayers. All those present and those who had come from afar would gather behind him. In Tahajjud salaah it was his habit to complete two full khatams of the Quran for the month - one by himself and one by Maulana Abdul Jaleel Saheb.

It is significant that on leaving for the mosque, Hazrat was very careful that no noise was made which would stir anyone sleeping in the house or who wanted to rest. But people woke up in any case and some even stayed awake. After the night prayers very little time was left for sehri. Hence they quickly brought him home for sehri and because of the little time available, the eaters quickly washed hands and rinsed mouths, while all the time keeping one eye on the clock and stretching their ears for the voice of the muezzin.

When Hazrat Madani had finished sehri, he lay down for a short while and then prepared for Fajr salaah. Salaah was generally performed at the greyness of dawn (isfaar), but during the last ten days when they were in I’tikaaf, it was performed at dawn finishing at isfaar. After Fajr those people who had come from far and were returning home, came forward to bid farewell and shake hands. Hazrat then returned to his residence", where one or two of his attendants pressed his body to press out the fatigue and exhaustion. His head was massaged as he lay down for his sleep.

It sometimes even happened that while sitting and talking he fell asleep. This never lasted long and soon he would wake up, perform istinja and wudoo and again busy himself with tilawat. At about ten O’clock those people would start arriving who had sought private audiences with him. If thereafter there was any time left in between, this too was spent in tilawat or in answering letters. It was at this time also that those people would be allowed to visit him with whom he had some special things to discuss. It sometimes continued up to Zuhr time and sometimes he found a few minutes in between for resting a while.

During this year he was feeling quite unwell and suffered from fever from about the middle of Ramadan. Hence his close attendants felt that for him to perform I'tikaaf would be a great obstacle. But it so happened that because of the fever troubling him, he often felt cold so that he had to wear a 'chader' and fans in the mosque had to be turned off. Sometimes he had to take tea in between the raka-'ahs of tahajjud. Even in this condition and in spite of the fever, he still continued to prolong the qiraa-at and qiyaam in tahajjud. Because of his ill-health tahajjud could not be performed for four nights with the result that quite a bit of the Quran in tahajjud could not be recited. This had to be made up in the last ten nights.

The crowd was quite big with the result that he could not find the time in I'tikaaf for the nightly half hour rest period as at his residence. Then also because of increase in tasks to perform he hardly found any time to rest. This also took its toll on him. But during the last ten nights the crowd was even bigger. People even stayed and slept in the streets around the mosque and thus the number of questions asked in notes sent forward after Zuhr were so much more and so also the number of those who wished to enter into 'baiat with him. Those students of tasawwuf who wished to relate to him their spiritual condition in order to acquire words of guidance and advice also increased tremendously. The result was that numbers had to be issued to them. There was also a significant increase in the number of those who came to bid him farewell after Fajr salaah. On finishing with this, Hazrat went into his resting place in the mosque to rest for a short while.

During the night while the whole gathering was asleep, Hazrat very carefully and quietly got up and went to perform wudoo to get busy with his own customary practices of the night. The 27th night is generally believed to be the night of Laylatul-qadr. One need not even ask about the size of the crowd on this night! So many were the notes after Zuhr salaah to be answered and so numerous were the number of bottles to be 'blown upon' that his whole musallah was practically surrounded by them. And when after tahajjud salaah Hazrat lifted up his hands for dua, the whole masjid re-echoed with the crying voices, wailing aloud before their Maker. Hazrat himself was so affected and in such an ecstatic state, which not even those who had seen can describe.

On that night questions were asked as to the exact time of (Laylatul-qadr. I (Maulana Abdul Hameed A'zame) said:

"The time and details of Laylatul-qadr is disclosed to the true servants of Allah. I wonder on which night it fell this year."

Hazrat replied: "In my opinion it fell on the 23rd night of Ramadan this year."

On the evening of the 30th Ramadan the Eid moon was sighted and after Maghrib

salaah Hazrat left the masjid to go to his place of residence. On this night in tahajjud salaah he made such a long qiyaam, as he had never done before during the whole month of Ramadan. On the morning of Eid at exactly half past nine Hazrat performed Eid salaah."

THE RAMADAN OF HAZRAT SHAH ABDUL QADIR RAIPURI:

Many anecdotes concerning Maulana Shah Abdul Qadir Raipuri have already been mentioned in 'AAP BETI'. The lifespan of Hazrat Shaikhul Islam and Maulana Raipuri happen to largely coincide with mine, and the favours of these two saintly men upon this humble soul are such that words cannot tell. Even today those who had seen them and enjoyed their company are not counted in hundreds but in thousands.

At the time when their biographies were being written, many friends insisted that I also pen down my thoughts and appreciation of them, but it so happened that my being so involved in teaching activities precluded me from doing so even after hard thinking. And now, when I am freed from such obligations, when thoughts and incidents about them and their lives come to end, tears involuntarily stream from my eyes.

Hazrat Shaikhul Islam never verbally commended that I should spend Ramadan in his company, but from certain signs of his, I got the impression that that was what he would have liked. Hazrat Raipuri, on the other hand, did not only request but actually insisted. But, unfortunately, until the time of his demise, I was unable to do so, because of my teaching and research obligations. Perhaps I have already stated in 'AAP BETI' that towards the end of his life the favours of Hazrat Raipuri upon me were so many, that when his death came, I was completely shattered and devastated. It was an extremely hard loss to bear.

There were times when after a day or two in his company, I sought permission to return for fear of causing harm to my lecturing on Sahih Bukhari. Then Hazrat on various occasions used to say:

"You are now worried and cry over your Bukhari lectures. So go ahead and teach. But when you are free from it one day, where will I be?"

Towards Shawwal 1374 H Hazrat Raipuri became very ill and had to be treated by doctors continuously. Hence, to facilitate his treatment, he was brought to stay in the Kangron Wali Cot," in Bahut. At the time it became my fixed routine for quite a while that after having taught Abu Dawood Shareef in the second hour in the afternoon to go straight to the bus stop. If the bus was ready to leave, I used to arrive in time to perform Asr salaah. But if there was a delay, I performed Asr at

the masjid near the terminus and then departed. As I did this for quite a time, the drivers were quite acquainted with my routine and usually waited for me for about three to four minutes. I got off at Bahut, performed Asr salaah at the Kangron Wali Masjid and proceed to visit Hazrat Raipuri.

Through Allah's grace the hearts of the drivers became so soft that on arrival at Bahut they drove so fast straight to the house where Hazrat lay (a few kilometres away) allowed me to get off and then on return, went to the terminus to let off the other passengers. These drivers were Muslims, Hindus as well as Sikhs. At times the other passengers used to complain loudly:

"Stop! We want to get off at Bahut!"

But it seemed as if the drivers never heard them. On having let me get off they said to the people:

"What will it be if you should arrive one or two minutes late. This poor Maulana has to walk a distance of one and a half miles from Bahut. Be a bit patient. (We merely do him a favour).

After arriving there in Bahut, I spent the night in Hazrat's presence very early the next morning, after drinking a cup of tea, I took the first lorry back to Saharanpur. I have told this long story (which in fact has nothing to do with Ramadan) but, now, on remembering, tears once again stream from my eyes.

We were talking about Ramadan. I happened to spend two half Ramadans in Hazrat's company. The first time was in Ramadan 1378 H when Hazrat was residing in Bahut House Saharanpur. At that time after having recited my para after Zuhr time, I used to go to Bahut House and return only after having performed taraweeh with Hazrat. There are many anecdotes, which I can tell about this Ramadan, but one incident was quite significant and will remain in my memory.

I had a fixed place in a corner of Hazrat's room. May Allah reward brother Altaf well for his having actually covered up one area like in the case of those in I'tikaaf for my sitting place. My bedding and pillow remained there at all times so that at all times I could open the door nearest to my bedding and quietly go and sit down. At Asr time I used to go and pay my respects to Hazrat Raipuri, but most of the time he was unaware of my presence. One day I entered while at that time Hazrat was being given some medicine to drink.

One or two of his attendants were present. At that time I perceived such a stream of light (noor) streaming down that even one so devoid of spiritual perception as

myself became intensely aware of the spiritual light descending. It seemed as if the very sun was shining in the room. For quite a long time until Asr I remained pondering over the fact that in the iftar (eating) of some people there is more spiritual blessings than in the fasting of thousands of fasting ones. That spiritual experience is something which I had never before witnessed and never afterwards. When today that scene passes through my mind’s eye, I still feel the ecstacy thereof.

It was Hazrat’s desire that he should be informed of my presence, but I stopped the attendants from doing so in order that there should be no diversion of Hazrat’ s spiritual attentions. I also remember that the contact with brother Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi commenced from that year onwards. He tells the story of his initial contact with Hazrat Raipuri in considerable detail and extreme devotion.

I also remember many other incidents which are quite noteworthy, but if I should write them all down here, it will take up at least five or six pages, which, in any case, will not be relevant to the subject of the Ramadan of the Elders. However, my heart still longs for them to be written down and Insha-Allah if a chance presents itself in future, I shall surely take the opportunity.

During that year Hazrat demanded that Shah Mas’ood Saheb should lead the taraweeh salaah, which he did with great feeling and style. He completed the full khatam on the evening of 25th Ramadan, where after for the last four days, various other persons led taraweeh. Due to the fact that at Hazrat’s place taraweeh started at the ‘awwal’ time - quite early - while Qari Muzaffar led the prayers in the Madressa Masjid a bit later, I could still return from Bahut House to join Qari Saheb for about four Raka-'ahs of nafl salaah. At that time I was very much fond of tea after taraweeh. Bread was prepared at home and some things were sent from here and there.

Maulana Abul Hasan Ali also spent the major part of Ramadan at Bahut House and so did Sufi Abdul Hameed Saheb, the nephew of Maulana Rahim Bakhsh and some others. It was the fixed routine among Hazrat’s attendants that on completing taraweeh, they came to my place for tea. They returned only about two hours later.

The second Ramadan in Hazrat’s company was the last one of his life in 1381 H. for quite a few months prior to his death he had insisted quite emphatically that I should come to him and temporarily relieve myself of my teaching of Bukhari Shareef. But how could I?

Up to then it had become my fixed routine to leave for Raipur every week after Juma salaah, even without having eaten anything. (I have already mentioned in

‘AAP BETI’ that on going to visit Maulana Mohammad (Ilyaas in Nizamuddin and Maulana Raipuri in Raipur, I stopped eating one day before because of the way in which these two holy men of great hospitality fed me at their places. They were genuinely pleased at my presence).

I used to go after Juma, stay there for two days, perform Fajr with Hazrat at first dawn and return back to Saharanpur after a cup of tea. For the month of Ramadaan it had been fixed that I was to spend half of it in Saharanpur and the second half in Raipur. I was to leave for Raipur on the 15th Ramadan. But then news reached me that Maulana Yusuf' Saheb (of Nizamuddin) was coming to me on the 7th. While waiting for him, I was delayed (as he did not arrive as expected) and only arrived in Raipur on the 17th. That was the day he finally arrived and I got in his car with him to proceed to Raipur. We had iftar with Hazrat in his majlis. Maulana Yusuf returned the' next day and I remained with Hazrat at the Khanqah for the rest of the month. I only returned to Saharanpur after Eid salaah.

During the course of that month I also had to return to Saharanpur for two days. The sight of so many countryside people from the villages travelling towards their Eidgahs on oxen-drawn carts, horse-carts etc - all of them dressed in their finest clothes, with pleasure written all over their faces, is still very fresh in my mind. The Eid salaah in the villages is performed as soon as the sun is out while in the smaller towns it is performed quite later, even up to eleven O’clock. On the way back to Saharanpur we saw thousands of villagers sitting upon ‘tangas’, horse drawn-carts, carts drawn by oxen, donkeys and mules - loaded with old people, children and young men - splendidly dressed in their best clothes and laughing with pleasure as they proceeded towards their Eidgah for the Eid salaah. What a sight that was!

In that year Moulvi Fazlur Rahman, the son of Moulvi Abdul Mannan Saheb performed the taraweeh salaah in the Bagh Masjid (the mosque in the Orchard) while Moulvi Abdul Mannan Saheb Gujranwala, performed it in the room next to the room wherein Hazrat stayed. I also performed taraweeh behind him in the latter part of Ramadan after having completed my recitation of the full Quran at home.

During that year Hazrat’s privacy and seclusion after Zuhr was very strictly observed and adhered to. Only one special attendant was allowed to remain with him at all times to see to his possible needs; otherwise no one was allowed inside.

After performing fajr salaah at the earliest time, Hazrat shook hands with departing visitors and went to sleep. Doctors had insisted that he should refrain form fasting due to his ill health. Thus at about ten o’clock within the privacy of his own room he was fed something. By that time ill health for quite a few years

had weakened his system considerably - so much so that he could hardly sit up without any support. On top of that there was a clamour from Pakistan for a visit from him to that country. People had come to hear of this impending visit with the result that the crowds visiting him were very great.

A short while after having been fed something, four of his attendants picked him up and brought him out of the room on his bed so that visitors could see him and enjoy the sight of his noble person like moths around a flame. Very often at such times I too had to struggle to keep visitors from coming too near his bed. Numerous were the ones who came with the intention of entering into bai-at.

Every time he was brought out people sat until up to deep into the 'bagh' (orchard) and Hafiz Abdul Sattar initiated them into bai-'at with Hazrat. Initially Hazrat recited 'Bismillah' softly, but there was no long recitation of initiation. After the 'Bismillah' the Kalimah 'Tayyiba' was recited, then taubah was made of all sins, the importance of salaah inculcated and the importance of following the Sunnat advised, whereupon the bai-'at was concluded.

After Asr until Maghrib Hazrat's bed was again left outside. For quite a number of years in this majlis a certain book, mostly dealing with travels in India and Pakistan was read. During this Ramadan Khwaja Ma'soom Saheb's MAKTOOB was being read by Azad Saheb. The original MAKTOOBAAT are written in Persian but has been translated into Urdu by Maulana Ahmad Fareed Amrohi and the translation is that one which had been printed in AI-Furqan.

As a result of the big gathering iftar was organized in various places in the mosque and the Madressa. The iftar of those who enjoyed a special relationship with Hazrat was performed near where Hazrat lay on his bed. Thereafter Maghrib salaah was performed in the thatched-roof building while the rest of the crowd performed it in the masjid. Supper for the guests was served about half an hour later at various places. At that time from about 1338 H onwards I was not in the habit of eating supper after iftar. Even at iftar too, I merely ate some dates with zam-zam. My habit was to eat after Esha.

Moulvi Ali Mia had seen the moon in Kuwait on Sunday evening before coming away from there. In Hejaz, Damascus etc the fast started on Sunday while in India and Pakistan it started on Tuesday.

In that year the grandson of my sister led taraweeh in the Masjid of Hakeem Ayyub Saheb. Maulana Yusuf arrived in Saharanpur on the 4th Shawwal after Maghrib. On the 5th Shawwal early in the morning on arrival in Raipur Ra-oofur Rahman said:

“A very important decision awaits consultation with you and is dependant upon your opinion and advice. Please do not refuse to provide needed advice.”

I replied: “Until such time that I do not know what the nature of the consultation is, I cannot make any promises.”

He said: “Do not worry. Hazrat will himself explain the issue. But, please do not refuse to be involved.”

I again replied: “I am afraid that I cannot give any promise until I know the nature of the issue.”

Then he said: “We have prevailed upon Hafiz Abdul Aziz to agree to stay here in Raipur permanently after Hazrat. Hazrat has agreed subject to your approval.”

I replied: “I will most certainly agree with that. In fact, that is my own expressed desire.”

Soon afterwards I was called into Hazrat’s presence. Three of us that is Hazrat, Ra-oofur Rahman and myself discussed the matter for quite a while.

(Some people refuse to accept that such a consultation did actually take place, but it is not for me at this time to disclose intimate details of the confidential consultations.)

Anyway, soon afterwards Hafiz Saheb was called into the meeting and I said to him: "Hafiz Saheb, it is Hazrat’s desire and my wish also that in future you should remain here permanently after Hazrat departs. But you are a man of numerous responsibilities and duties, which judging outwardly, seem very difficult for you to leave.”

Hafiz Saheb was quite moved by our wish. He replied: “After such an order from two personalities like yourselves, how can I ever refuse?”

I said to him" “Think it over carefully."

Thereafter, having taken an undertaking and promise from him, he and Ra-oofur Rahman left and I said to Hazrat:

“Shall I make the announcement of the appointment of Hafiz Saheb when we sit down to eat?”

Hazrat gave permission. Meanwhile the tablecloths were being spread out. After everyone had sat down to eat, I first of all called the Elders of Raipur together and said to them:

“I hereby bring to you the good news and congratulations that Hazrat Hafiz Saheb had agreed to remain here permanently. May Allah bless you all and may Allah also allow Hafiz Saheb to become fully blessed with the blessing of the Khanqah.”

Thereafter the meal commenced. The brothers from Delhi left Raipur to go to Ghana near Bahut, where a Tablighi ijtima was taking place. On Thursday morning a car came to fetch me early in the morning. I left Raipur at 8 o’clock to arrive at Ghana by nine o’clock in time to take part in the final dua by Maulana Yusuf Saheb and the farewell handshaking sending the jamaats on their way. At twelve o’clock Maulana Yusuf left Ghana for Saharanpur, where he remained for a short while before departing for Delhi at three o’clock.

Hazrat's journey to Pakistan had been fixed. Hence I made use of every opportunity to visit him prior to his departure. On the 11th of Shawwal I again visited him and on the evening of the 12th Maulana Yusuf came to Saharanpur and on discovering that I was not there, he too came to Raipur, arriving at 10 o’clock. By that time Hazrat’s journey had been postponed and we both left on the morning of the 15th.

Actually I was talking about the Ramadan of the Akabir, and look where I have diverted myself. On remembering one thing another comes into the mind.

Maulana Abul Hasan Ali writing the life story of Hazrat Raipuri writes about: RAMADAN IN RAIPUR:

“Ramadaan in Raipur is a very special occasion. From long before the time people prepare for it and await its arrival most eagerly. Employees make special timely arrangements with their employers to obtain leave in order to come to spend Ramadan in Raipur. Teachers from deeni madressas consider this a special opportunity not to be missed. A large crowd of Ulema, hafizes etc gather there.

Before the partition of India the number of people with spiritual ties and Ulema from madressas in West Punjab, was the greatest. The people of Raipur and the villages around it take great pains and with tremendous generosity organise the iftar for all these people as well as those guests resident in the Kanqah - even their supper and sehri meals are provided by these people.

And Shaikh, In accordance with the example and practice of his Shaikh, all majlises are suspended, no time is set aside for conversation and small talk, even

mail and the answering thereof is suspended. For practically the whole of twenty-four hours Hazrat remains secluded in the company of his own self, except for salaah times. When anyone arrived with whom some time has of necessity to be spent, it become an ordeal for him.

Before his illness he used to perform iftar with the guests in public, breaking the fast with dates and zam-zam. Food was taken immediately after Maghrib in those days with tea afterwards. This time up to Esha used to be a time for majlis, but not now in Ramadan.

After azaan preparations were made for Esha and while the preparations are on, the Ulema in the first saff are busy discussing some weighty questions with Hazrat replying. After Esha he either sat there or lay down for about half an hour while attendants pressed his legs for his comfort. Taraweeh took place in the Khanqah as well as in the Masjid. In both places the full Quran was recited. Generally there were many hafizes but Hazrat always preferred to appoint good hafizes with a fine manner of recitation as well as good voices.

One year 1372 H (1') 53) Hazrat, spent Ramadan in Mansoori together with fifty or sixty attendants and followers. Maulana Abdul Mannan Sahib led the taraweeh prayer. At that time the time after taraweeh used to be a time when Hazrat used to sit with his attendants in majlis and was a time when normally he was in a very pleasant mood. Many of his followers stayed awake throughout the night in ibadat and tilawat.

All in all, during the month of Ramadan all the special features of intense devotion and spiritual exertion can be observed at all time by day or by night. Even the weak ones and those without courage could say:

"Whoever is deprived of the produce of the liquor-shop is not deprived at all."

A certain person, who had been fortunate enough to have spent the last ten days of Ramadan in Hazrat's company, but as a result of his weak health and lack of determination and courage, could not exert, himself fully in ibadat, wrote a letter to his friend, saying:

"While seekers lay at the door of shop,

Looting it of precious gifts

Nicely did the Ramadan of those

Whose cup is filled with ill fortune,

Pass before their eyes.”

SAWANIH QADRI:

That year Maulana Ali Mia also left Lucknow on Saturday the 16th Ramadan to join the group at Mansoori to return home only after Eid. At another place in the same book he describes the last Ramadan of Hazrat Raipuri:

THE LAST RAMADAN AND THE JOURNEY TO PAKISTAN:

“The Ramadan of 1381 A.H (1962) coincided with February 1962 in Raipur. Before that and on the firm insistence of Hazrat Raipuri it was the general routine of Shaikhul-Hadith Maulana Zakarya to proceed to Raipur immediately after Jumu’ah to return to Saharanpur on Sunday. Because it was difficult to travel like that every week in Ramadan, it was decided that he spend half of Ramadan in Saharanpur and the other half in Raipur.

The taraweeh salaah was led by Moulana Fazlur Rahman Dehlawi the son of Moulana Abdul Mannan. Maulana Abdul Azia Khatolwi had arrived prior to the onset of Ramadan. Perhaps at that time someone must have felt that this was Hazrat’s last Ramadan on earth and that the time for his demise was near at hand.

From after Asr till shortly before Maghrib a kitab was being read. It was the MAKTOOBAAT of Khwaja Ma’soom (printed Al-Furqan). The crowd of people present was exceptionally big and was increasing all the time. Hazrat performed Eid salaah behind Azad Saheb. When after the salaah Hazrat was put in a ‘kursi’ and carried to the grave of his Shaikh, it was a tremendous emotional moment. The time spoke for itself as if to say:

“You were our predecessors. We are the one to follow. We shall surely, if Allah pleases, be joined with you.”

Hazrat always had this worry and desire that after him the Madressa and the Khanqah should remain in operation. Various suggestions had at various times been put forward to see that happen. However, no specific solution had up to then been decided upon, which gave full confidence that the objective in mind would certainly be accomplished.

In this regard, prior to Ramadan, Maulana Hafiz Abdul Aziz had been summoned from Pakistan to Raipur and he was staying in the upper storey. He was, according to his own high standards and practice, busy with his spiritual efforts. For the sake of keeping the Khanqah in full operation, a suitable person had to be chosen and

appointed. Maulana Abdul Aziz is the grandson of Maulana Shah Abdul Raheem Raipuri (RA) and is a product of this Khanqah with its spiritual splendour and enlightenment. He is an Alim, a scholar, a man of righteousness, a meticulous follower of the Shariat, a man of profuse zikr and great spiritual efforts. He is a mureed of Hazrat with 'ijazat' for bai-'at from him - a man who had received his spiritual training under the sympathetic guidance of Hazrat himself.

Hafiz Saheb was born in 1905 and memorised the Quran in Hazrat Abdul Raheem's lifetime and led taraweeh prayers there. He completed his studies at Mazahirul-Uloom after studying there from beginning to end. He was a member of the Daura-e-Hadeeth class of 1343 H. During the dangerous times of 1947 in the Punjab, he was an extremely brave and courageous fighter and a real pillar of strength for the Muslims. Then, when that area became ravished, he moved to Pakistan with his whole family.

He finally settled in Sargodha (Pakistan). He is a man who is quite well known to the people of Raipur and the surrounding areas and they love him dearly. Because of his close link and relationship with the Raipuri spirit and system, as well as own undoubted ability, he is quite capable of keeping the Raipuri fountain of spiritual guidance strong and flowing.

Hazrat chose him to be resident spiritual guide of Raipur. Thus after Ramadan, in the first week of Shawwal 1381 H on the instruction of Hazrat Raipuri, Hazrat Shaikhul-Hadith (who was in Raipur at the time) made the announcement to all the inmates and residents of the Khanqah that Hazrat had chosen Hafiz Abdul Aziz Saheb to remain in Raipur and that Hafiz Saheb had accepted the appointment:

He said: "May AIlah grant His blessings: We had been very much worried that this programme of spiritual progress and development, which had been carrying on here, may one day die out. We thank Allah. We thank Allah. We hope and pray that this place will remain filled and remain in operation for all time and that this programme will continue..."

SAWANIH QADRI:

Maulana Ali Mia writes further: "Hazrat's period of staying in Pakistan included the month of Ramadan. For some time the sincere mureeds and faithful well wishers had expressed the desire that he should spend a Ramadan with them. They tried to get him there so that the splendour and blessings of Ramadan for them could be further increased. Ramadan came along during the hot months of summer. During the year 1371 He spent the holy month in Murree in the home of Sufi Abdul Hammed on the invitation of Janab Mohammad Shafee Quraishy and

Malik Mohammad Din. There were more than a hundred guests and attendants, but in spite of that and the great cost involved in looking after so large a crowd, these two generous persons were perfect hosts. They really did look after the needs of all and bore the expenses with great generosity.

In 1374 Ramadan was again spent in 'Ghora Gulley', Murree. In 1375 H it was spent in Lyalpur, where the guests and attendants numbered more than two hundred. In 1376 H it was in Lahore where the late Chaudrey Abdul Hameed bore a considerable part of the responsibility of hosting Hazrat and his entourage. During 1378 it was in Lyalpur again, where after Hazrat did not spend another Ramadan in Pakistan. The last two Ramadans of his life were spent in Raipur in 1380 and 1381 H.

SAWANIH QADRI:

It had already been said that Ramadan of 1372 A.H was spent in Mansoori. In the above quotation form Maulana Ali Mia he left out the year 1377 H. This Ramadan was also spent in Lahore in the home of Chaudrey Abdul Hameed. Maulana Ali Mia also wrote that Ramadan 1378 H was spent in Lyalpur. This was quoted from my diary. But in actual fact it was a mistake made by the one who copied it or who copied it from him. This Ramadan was actually spent in Saharanpur in Bahut House and the Ramadan of 1379 was also spent in Lyalpur.

THE RAMADAN OF MY LATE FATHER MAULANA YAHYA SAHEB:

My late father had a fixed programme and routine for Ramadan. The programme changed annually according to prevailing circumstances. I cannot remember any of his travels in Ramadan while resident in Gangoh. I have already said that in the last Ramadan of the life of Hazrat Gangohi in 1322 A.H my late father led the taraweeh salaah in Gangoh at the instruction of Hazrat himself.

That was the year when for the first time since having memorised the Quran, he sat down on the 29th Sha'baan to recite 1-1/4 paras from the Quran as preparation for taraweeh out of fear for Hazrat Gangohi and out of fear for making a mistake. After the first day of recitation, the fear left him and thereafter he never again had to make 'daur'.

I have-already mentioned repeatedly that my father was so addicted to Quranic recitations by heart, that he did the manual work of running a bookshop, taking out books, making parcels, addressing them, while all the time reciting Quran.

During his stay in Saharanpur, I do not remember him having performed taraweeh in any other place, except for the year 1332 A.H when the mosque of the old Darul

Talabah was being erected. On the erection of my late Shaikh, Maulana Saharanpuri, my father was the first person to recite the Quran from the mehrab of this mosque in 1332 A.H.

During his stay in Saharanpur, my father's routine was that he spend most of his time in the Masjid of the shoemakers next to the house of Hakeem Yaqoob Saheb. This was apart from the time he used to spend in teaching. It was here that he performed iftar without any special preference for anything special. Of Course, if there were some dates and zam-zam available, these were given preference over all other things. (At the iftar table of Hazrat Maulana Khaleel Ahmad Saheb great importance was given to having dates and zam-zam for iftar. Any dates and zam-zam brought to him by Hajis, as presents were stored away in tins and in bottles. In those days there was not this free availability of dates and zam-zam as is the case in our times when Allah made travel so fast and easy.

After Maghrib salaah my father generally performed nafl salaah very lightly before going home to eat a light meal either by himself or in the company of one or two guests. He usually liked to refrain from eating with a lot of people as that took up a lot of time. After the meal he lay down on his bed, reciting softly by himself the para, which he was to recite in taraweeh. The recitation of the day (which he did continuously) is a different khatam from this one. After taraweeh he came home to rest for a short while. He always complained about difficulty in falling asleep and of sleeping very little. If it so happened that he could not fall asleep, or if he woke up from sleep, he started reading Quran.

Sehri was taken at the very last minute. Here too there was no special preference, and neither was it fixed that he should drink milk or tea or anything else. Anything that was cooked at home was welcome. But at that time it was quite common that in our family roti and kofta were eaten and thus these things were generally put before him.

I have already explained in 'AAP BETI' that in our home village of Kandhla it was our family tradition for generations, which was respected by the Elders, that in Ramadan after Asr, a huge pot of 'pulao' was cooked daily. It was usually ready just before Iftar time. From it smaller pots were filled and sent to the houses of the village. The rest was then brought to the traditional family home near the masjid and placed there on a small platform. There, in the open field next to the mosque, the elders of the family performed iftar.

When anyone passed near them, they would call him and insist that he join them for iftar. Having eaten 'pulao' for iftar, they then went to perform Maghrib in the masjid nearby and remained busy with nafl salaah up to Esha time.

In the masjid apart from the muazzin, there were two safs in which all the musallis were hafiz of the Quran. The muazzin came there as a young man from somewhere else who had run away from home and found himself begging from door to door. The elders of the village told him: “Better than begging will be for you to serve our masjid. Why not become our muazzin and caretaker? You will receive your meals, clothes and daily needs.” He accepted and until the last day at the age of 80, he remained the muazzin of the mosque.

Sometimes they used to say to him light-heartedly:

“0 Mullah, they have kept you here. Actually among the musallis of this mosque there is no non-hafiz.

The elders always remained busy with nafl prayers up to or near the time for Esha. Those who resided near the mosque then went home performed wudoo and other necessary tasks before gathering for Esha. Everybody performed Esha salaah together where after the younger ones returned homewards to continue performing nafl salaah till sehri time.

Because there was great emphasis upon not more than three muqtadees for nafl salaah behind one Imam, the lady muqtadees were changed continuously and so were the Imams. The Hafiz Saheb would perform four raka-’ahs with such and such relatives in one place. Then he would go to another place to perform four raka’ahs with some other relatives as muqtadees. This continued until sehri time. For sehri everybody - old or young - again gathered in their own homes to eat sehri with their own families.

As already stated, for sehri roti and ‘kofta’ was very necessary together with ‘mithi chori’ (a kind of sweetmeat) as the third indispensable. People used to believe that because these things take a long time to be digested, one did not experience hunger in Ramadan.

Fajr salaah was performed in the ‘awwal waqt’ soon after the azaan. After the salaah everybody went to sleep and some would get up a bit later, others earlier. Then throughout the day they remained busy with tilawat until shortly before Maghrib, some reading by themselves, others reciting to others.

I have written in VIRTUES OF RAMADAN’ as well as in VIRTUES OF THE Quran ‘about the women and the girls of our household. May Allah grant them more strength to do more. In spite of their duties in connection with preparations for meals, and in spite of their manifold duties of rearing children of which each one of them had several children, they spend the nights of the month of Ramadan listening to various hafizes in salaah and during the day they each read (up to 14 or

15 paras per day. In this manner they competed with and emulated each other.

My paternal grandmother (as I have mentioned before) was herself a hafiza of the Quran. Hence it was her daily routine to recite one ‘manzil’ per day by heart. But during Ramadan she recited fourty paras daily. In other words, one full khatam plus ten more paras. Apart from that she also recited hundreds of various tasbeehs daily, which altogether totalled 17000. The details of all this is to be found in TAZKIRA-E-KHALIL.

The story of my father’s grandmother is also mentioned there. She listened to the whole Quran in one rak-’ah recited by her son Maulana Ra-ooful Hasan. Allah be praised that the love for the recitation of the Quran is still alive in my family. These females do not find much time left for sleep or rest. The time of the night is spent in listening to the Quran being recited at a time when the children are asleep. The poor children are forcibly kept awake by day. Should a child wish to fall asleep during the day one of them will pinch him to stay awake and another will start making all kinds of noises to drive away sleep. Sometimes I used to feel very sorry for these poor children. May Allah accept all the efforts of these women. Ameen!

Maulana Muzaffar Hussain writes regarding the practices of the MASHAA-IKH KANDHLA:

“During the month of Ramadan they spend the whole night in ibadat, and never slept for a moment, neither lay down on their beds. For the fear of the day of Judgement, tears streamed from their eyes.”

MASHAA-IKH KANDHLA:

All this has merely been mentioned by the way.

My father’s main pleasure lay in performing salaah at its earliest time. At that time, however, fajr salaah in all the Saharanpur mosques was performed at isfaar time, and he also did so. In Hazrat Saharanpuri’s time in all the other eleven months it was performed at isfaar time but in Ramadan it was done about fifteen minutes earlier. After fajr salaah my late father also used to go to sleep. He normally woke up about three hours later to busy himself with his ‘ilmi’ activities, teaching some of those students who remained in the madressa and had a special close relationship with him. During the day he did not have the habit of making ‘daur’ of the Quran nor of reciting to anyone.

I have already mentioned that during the time he was resident in Gangoh, he loved to call out the Maghrib azaan. He had a loud voice and recited quite a long azaan.

He used to say that the reason for pulling the azaan so long was so that people could be perform their iftar at home and come to the mosque without having to hurry themselves unduly and still be in time for salaah. His azaan used to reach quite far. He said:

“On hearing my azaan, people can perform iftar without haste. And after it they can leave their homes and with ease they are able to join Hazrat Imam Rabbani Maulana Rasheed Ahmad Gangohi in the first takbeer.”

At Hazrat Gangohi’s place there was the practice of synchronising clocks and watches daily at midday. My father says:

“About one or two minutes before sunset, I used to ascend onto the roof of the khanqah and await sunset, upon which I normally picked one or two blades of grass, which I chewed by way of-breaking my fast before giving the azaan. The azaan was given in loud and lengthy manner.”

The incidents about my father in Meerut, the Nawab wali masjid, Delhi and in the village of Bahut have already been mentioned. In MASHAAIKH KANDHLA is written:

“It was the fixed routine of Maulana Mohammad Yahya to go to Kandhla every Ramadan to recite the Quran in salaah to his mother and grandmother and on completing a full recitation in three days, he returned. In the year in which he passed away, in Zil Qada, he completed a full khatam for them in one single night and returned from there the next morning.”

MASHAA-IKH KANDHLA:

My father also had the habit of reciting the Quran aloud in the latter part of the night, both in and out of the salaah. Quite often I was woken up from deep sleep by his loud recitation and his crying before Allah. There are two of my Elders whose late night crying in supplication before Allah I have observed - one is Shaikhul Islam, Maulana Madani and the other is my father. Whenever Hazrat Shaikhul-Islam had to travel to any place in the neighbourhood of Saharanpur, for a lecture or to attend some function. I was almost always his companion. His travels were always fast and quick affairs. He would arrive here in his motorcar by four o’clock, pick me up and proceed to places like Rerhy or Dhulapura, for example, for a public lecture and thereafter drop me off again on his return by late night or early morning.

Once in this manner I happened to go with him to Abha. There he instructed that my bed should be placed in the same room where he was to sleep, even though

some of his special attendants were with us. It was winter time and quite cold. The other attendants were put in another room.

The people of Abha had close contact with all the Shaikhs of Deoband, Saharanpur, Raipur and Thana Bhavan. Hence they were a very brave outspoken and courageous group. One of them said to Maulana Madani:

“Why is it that his bed should here in your room while the others have their beds at another place?”

Before Hazrat could reply, I said: “Through Hazrat’s being here in your midst, there is the possibility that he may suffer some harm. Hence one body-guard should be on the outside and the other on the inside.”

The truth of the matter is that whenever Hazrat Madani, Hazrat Raipuri, and Hazrat Meerut came here, they all insisted that my bed should be near their sleeping places. As for my father I always used to sleep near him. That was how I always used to see and hear him cry bitterly (for the welfare of the Umma) in the middle of the night before Allah, like a child.

I have heard that Hazrat Gangohi used to seclude himself in his private room after Zuhr and at times the sounds of his crying in dua before Allah used to be so loud that it could be heard outside the room.

THE RAMADAN OF HAZRAT MAULANA ILYAAS SAHEB:

Although Maulana Ilyaas has been mentioned already in ‘AAP BETI’, I now only wish to mention something here about his Ramadan routine. It was the general habit of this uncle of mine that whatever he was to eat at night was eaten at iftar time. He did not have a habit of drinking tea. His meal was indeed a very simple one - not the “meal of your fathers” as mentioned in the hadith of Abu Dawood Shareef.

The hadith says that if the time for Esha is at hand and the evening meal was ready, than the evening meal should be eaten first. Then it so happened that a certain person in surprise said to Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Abbaas that we have heard the word of Rasulullah (SAW), and if we are going to get busy with the evening meal, the congregational prayer, will be lost. Thereupon Sayyiduna Ibn Abbaas said:

“How do you think was their meals? Do you think it was like the” meal of your fathers”?”

In other words: Do you think it was such a multiple-course meal, which took such a long time to eat like that to which your fathers are used to? Their meal merely consisted of a few dates and a cup or two of 'abattu'.

And so was the meal of my uncle in its simplicity. It sometimes consisted only of a piece of roti. In any case after iftar, he performed Maghrib salaah. After maghrib it had always been his practice to perform long raka-'aha of nafl salaah, but in Ramadan, it used to be so long that he finished very near to the time for Esha.

After these nafls he used to lie down for a while in the masjid while some of his attendants pressed his legs to restore strength. About half an hour later it would be time for Esha and taraweeh, which he himself led. After taraweeh, he again lay down for a while without there being any majlis.

Very often he used to tell me that he feared that he would fall asleep as soon as he gave the salaam for Witr and before a pillow could be placed for him to rest his head upon. But when I visited there if he happened to be my guest, that time after taraweeh was my time for eating my evening meal. At such a mealtime, there always used to be some fruits brought along by some friends. My uncle generally joined in and in fact, I insisted on his partaking of it with us. He then used to spend about fifteen minutes or so with us.

At night it was his fixed routine to wake up at twelve O'clock, at which time his attendants would give him two boiled eggs, still warm. The eggs were boiled while he was busy with his toilet preparations. Having eaten the eggs, he busied himself with tahajjud salaah. This continued for a long time till the last moments of sehri time and then he ate sehri. There are times when I have seen him with a morsel of food in his right hand asking for someone to bring water, with which to rinse his mouth while at the same time telling someone to call the azaan. While the muezzin will ascend onto the roof, he will finish that little morsel, finishing just as the azaan is called.

There is a little story about wild figs. Hazrat and myself had a relative, who is an Imam somewhere in Delhi. He used to think my brother is the spiritual guide of everybody and that many things are disclosed to him in Ramadan in unseen manner. Once I spent the night there. At the time of iftar my uncle asked: "Is there anything to eat?"

Some people replied: "Only some wild figs which had been left over from last night."

My uncle replied: 'How nice! Bring it."

At the time for Sehri he again asked whether there was something to eat and again they told him: “Only some of the same wild figs which had been left over from last night."

Four or five such figs were then taken for sehri

The whole story can be read in ‘AAP BETI’.

Uncle performed his salaah at the earliest time. In Ramadan he did not have the habit of giving a lecture after fajr salaah. This was started by Maulana Yusuf Saheb. Hazrat used to remain seated on his musallah until Ishraq time making zikr and reciting his wazeefas.

All the attendants used to perform fajr and then go to sleep to wake up some time later at their own times. Hazrat remained busy and performed Ishraq salaah.

Generally he felt a bit tired at that time and if he had time he lay down to rest for a while. Otherwise he would give words of advice for the jamaats about to leave for Mewat or conversed with guests. In accordance with their standing he treated his visitors, looked after them and bore the expense of hosting them himself. And if anyone, who was a Sayed, happened to arrive, he gave them extra special attention. He even emphasised to me the importance of showing honour and respect to such people. If any of his mureeds or students was a Sayed, he was prepared to pardon and overlook faults.

Once I complained to him about one of him mureeds and students, who was also one of his attendants. Hazrat replied:

“I know of his fault; but he is a Sayed.”

Maulana Ali Mia writes in his book: ‘MAULANA ILYAAS AND HIS DEENI DAWAT’ “Maulana Mueenullah Nadwi reports: “I was once sick during Ramadan. My food was being brought to me in bed where I lay sick. Maulana Ilyaas was about to perform his nafl salaah and said to the boy responsible for bringing the food: “Leave the food. I will take it to him.”

The boy did not understand properly and brought the food to Maulana’s room. When he had finished salaah, he said: “I said to the boy, leave the food, I will take it away.” Thereafter Maulana himself brought the food and sat down by my bedside. For a long time he sat there talking to me in sympathetic terms and to comfort me.”

DEENI DAWAT:

The fact that Maulana Mueenullah was a Sayed had a lot to do with this great respect shown to him.

Hazrat also had the habit of sleeping for two or three hours in the afternoon, but for the period after Zuhr to Asr he retired to his private room and converse with visitors until Asr time. If he had arranged to teach any students some kitab, this was the time for that. After Asr he busied himself with loud zikr until Maghrib time. In the days other than during Ramadan, this zikr was performed in the latter part of the night, after tahajjud till Fajr time. This could be done at that time because in those times Fajr was performed a bit late at the onset of the greyness of dawn.

I have not seen any of my Elders so punctual about loud zikr as my late uncle. Before the last few years of his illness, he regularly recited the twelve tasbeehs and zikr of the 'Ismi zaat' in the latter part of the night, while in Ramadan he did so from Asr till Maghrib.

My uncle's third Haj journey commenced in Ramadan. Maulana Ali Mia writes: "In 1351 A.H he went for his third Haj. The new moon heralding in the month of Ramadan was sighted in Nizamuddin and taraweeh was performed at Delhi station. After the taraweeh salaah he left for Karachi."

DEENI DAWAT:

I had also gone to Delhi to see him off at Delhi station to bid him farewell. After having placed all the luggage on board the train, he performed taraweeh salaah on the station. Not only those who were to accompany him on the Haj journey, but also a large number of the residents of Delhi followed him in salaah. Many of them had already finished their taraweeh in the various mosques in the city, where salaah finished quite early. They were able to join in this congregation because this salaah started quite late.

Hazrat commenced his reading from Alif Laam Meem and performed the taraweeh in his own easy and comfortable manner as he was used to doing in his own mosque. The train left late and he had about (two) hours for the taraweeh.

Hazrat was a man who at all times talked about 'tableegh' and the 'tableeghi movement', just like the late Maulana Yusuf Saheb. He always engaged his listeners in such talks, even while eating and even in the compartments of a train or on a station. Many are still around who will be able to testify to this great missionary spirit of Maulana Yusuf.

Brother Maulana Thaani writes in his book: Sawaanih Yusuf: “Maulana Muhammad Ilyaas attached tremendous importance to the month of Ramadan. Numerous jamaats from Mewat used to arrive at the central headquarters during this month, and many jamaats left from there for all corners of the land. And at the centre itself the work carried on diligently.”

SAWAANIH YUSUF:

While dictating the writings for ‘AAP BETI’ about the great efforts and sacrifices of the Elders, many stories about them were remembered, and while doing so, an idea came into my mind to write a special booklet about their general practice and routines in the month of Ramadan, and to make it a supplement to “VIRTUES OF RAMADAN”. It was meant to be an addition to the objective of my late uncle, which he had in mind when he commands ‘VIRTUES OF RAMADAN’ to be written.

But alas! How deprived can one be! These eyes have seen the Elders from Hazrat Gangohi to his Khalifahs and the successors to his Khalifahs. Their kind affections and their spiritual attentions upon us were without ending and yet there is this deprived one of ill fortune!

All of them have showered me with their attentions, but like the tail of a dog am I, that even if the tail should remain in starch for twelve years-or sixty years-it will still remain crooked.

I wrote somewhere that when Hazrat Maulana Khaleel Ahmad wrote ‘BAZAL MAJHOOD’ in Medina, I was also present by his side. While he dictated, Hazrat Maulana once said:

Whenever that scene comes to mind, a thundering noise comes over me. I remember that when Hazrat said this to me, I was somewhere else in my thoughts. I also remember that when he said it, it shocked me into reality and for a very long time thereafter remained thinking: "Where was I'!”

There is a little story which I have heard from my late father and which I have also read somewhere. The jackal makes a Jot of noise while roaming about at night, especially during the last part of the night, crying out aloud. It is said that when the whole host of jackals come together, the leader of the pack exclaims with great pleasure and pride: “My father is a king!” On hearing this announcement, the whole pack of jackals all exclaim: “But what is that to do with you? What is that to do with me?” (What right does that give us to brag about that?)

That is exactly how I see myself. I shout out to the world that: “My father was like that. My grandfather was like this. My great-grandfather was like this. My Uncle was like this. My Shaikh was like this, and my Sheik’s Shaikh was such a wonderful person.” But then comes the question: “What is that to me? What is that to you?”

If Allah out of His Infinite Mercy and Grace should grant to me only a small share of the habits, worship, character and beautiful qualities of those Elders, what a joyful pleasure it will be!

“0 Lord, through the blessings of the great guides,

Let mine ending be a righteous one,

Through the intercession of the family of the Rasul

And his companions let Thy Grace be my companion;

Grant to me, 0 Lord of All, that strength and might

That full control over myself I shall have;

Let it be that at the final hour the Kalimah be on my tongue,

And that on Judgement Day among the righteous I be raised

Grant me Thy Helping Hand in this world and the next

Through the blessings of every saintly, pious one.”

Mohammad Zakarya Ist Rajab 1392 Saturday